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WILLIAM TELL.

AN HISTORICAL PLAY

FROM

(Johann Christoph) Friedrich

THE GERMAN OF SCHILLER

WITH NOTES

BY

WILLIAM PETER, Esq.

M. A. CH. CH. OXFORD.

Second edition.

Zu geneigten Aufträgen empfiehlt sich:

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Second edition

LUZERN.

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Prof. Edwin P. Seaver,
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(H. U. 1864.)

Die alten Zeiten und die alte Schweiz.

The olden Times and olden Switzerland.

WILLIAM TELL.

Dieses Werk ist zuerst in der **C. F. Winter**'schen Verlagshandlung in Heidelberg und Leipzig erschienen.

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A. Gebhardt.

PREFACE.

The Subject of this Drama was first suggested to Schiller by his Friend Gœthe, who, after a tour through the Forest-Cantons in 1797, had intended to have made it the Groundwork of an Epic Poem. "One valuable idea (says the Edinburgh Review) he certainly appears to have communicated to him, namely his own conception of the Character of Tell. With the exception of Schiller, all Dramatists, who have attempted the theme, paint him too much as a sentimental Reformer. But Gœthe saw that the true Dramatic capability of the Character lay in his simplicity both of feeling and expression; in representing him, as he was, a rude Dweller among the Mountains, leading a life of labour and never thinking of political Freedom or Slavery, untill Oppression penetrated to his own Fireside, and, even then, only anxious at first to escape the evil as best he might, till, step by step, he is led on to the death of Gessler, as the only means of preserving his own existence and that of his Family.—And thus, too, Schiller has represented him, as a Man of iron nerves, with all the homeliness of an Alpine Shepherd, — an affectionate Father and Husband, — a Being, naturally of a soft and gentle heart — who, even when driven at last to the death of his Enemy, and watching, from

his rocky cover, that Enemy's advance along the lonely Valley, shudders at the prospect that his Hands, which have hitherto only been dyed with the blood of the Chamois, are now to be steeped in that of his Fellow-Man.—Accordingly, as might have been expected, the success of this living Picture, upon the Stage was complete."

The Quarterly Review, on the same subject observes: "The noble Simplicity of Helvetic Manners is admirably painted in WILLIAM TELL, and the Enthusiasm of the Nation, in favour of Liberty, represented in colours the most captivating. This Piece, which breathes the cordiality of unsophisticated Nature, the rustic heroism of Men, whose Courage defied the gigantic power of Austria and whose Religion proceeded from the heart, deserves to have been acted at their National Festival, when, after enjoying Independance for 500 years, the Swiss celebrated the Birthday of their Freedom.—It is perhaps (adds the Reviewer) the only Tragedy in any language that has been improved by omitting the fifth Act."—However just or ingenious the contrast which is presented between the characters of Tell and John the Parricide, and the motives by which they were respectively instigated, to the death of their Enemies, the introduction of the latter can only serve to divert the attention and interest of the Spectator from the principal Catastrophe, which terminates with the death of Gessler and the deliverance of Switzerland.

Lucerne, September 30th 1837.

TO

THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, OF HOLKHAM

IN THE COUNTY OF NORFOLK,

EARL OF LEICESTER, &c. &c.

FOR UPWARDS OF SIXTY YEARS,

AN UNWEARIED BENEFACTOR OF HIS COUNTRY AND OF MANKIND:

WHO,

BY HIS EFFORTS AND EXAMPLE AS A COUNTRY-GENTLEMAN,

HAS ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE AGRICULTURE OF GREAT-BRITAIN,

THAT, WHICH THE WATTS, WEDGEWOODS, ARKWRIGHTS,

AND OTHER EMINENT MEN,

HAD DONE FOR ITS MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE,

SCATTERING PLENTY OVER A SMILING LAND,

AND AUGMENTING NOT LESS THE GENERAL WEALTH AND POWER

OF THE STATE,

THAN THE INDIVIDUAL COMFORTS AND RESOURCES OF ALL

CLASSES OF ITS CITIZENS:

WHO,

AS A POLITICIAN,

AND, FROM EARLY MANHOOD TO LATE AGE,

ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HIS NATIVE COUNTY

IN PARLIAMENT,

HAS APPROVED HIMSELF, IN ALL TRIALS,

— BY WORD AND DEED — THROUGH EVIL REPORT AND GOOD

REPORT — THE CONSISTENT FRIEND AND NEVER FLINCHING

ADVOCATE OF PEACE, LIBERTY, AND JUSTICE,

OPPOSING

(AMONG OTHER INIQUITIES OF THE TIMES)

THE AMERICAN AND FRENCH WARS;

AND SUPPORTING
PARLIAMENTARY - REFORM, CATHOLIC - EMANCIPATION,
THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION-LAWS,
THE MITIGATION OF OUR PENAL CODE,
THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE AND SLAVERY,
THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF IRELAND,
AND ALL THE OTHER — THE MANY OTHER — ACTS
OF ENLIGHTEND AND RIGHTEOUS POLICY,
WHICH HAVE DISTINGUISHEND THE WHIG-PARTY OF HIS AGE,
AND WHICH,
— HOWEVER DECRIED BY THE SELFISH FOLLY OR BLIND
VIOLENCE OF EXTREME FACTIONS —
WILL NOT FAIL TO SECURE TO THEIR AUTHORS AND UPHOLDERS
THAT BEST OF EARTHLY REWARDS,
THE GRATITUDE AND VENERATION OF THE WISE AND GOOD,
IN ALL SUCCEEDING AGES: —
TO THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, THEREFORE,
IN THANKFUL, THOUGH HUMBLE, TESTIMONY OF HIS LONG
SERVICES IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND HUMANITY,
THIS DRAMA,
RECORDING THE STRUGGLES OF AN INNOCENT AND OPPRESSED
PEOPLE IN DEFENCE OF THEIR DEAREST RIGHTS,
IS, WITH SINCERE AFFECTION AND RESPECT, INSCRIBED
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S OBLIGED FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
WILLIAM PETER.

THE HOLY-HOUSE, RÜTLI 1 OCTOBER 1837.

CHARACTERS.

HERRMANN GESSLER, Governor of Schwytz and Uri.
RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, his Lieutenant.
WERNER, Baron of ATTINGHAUSEN.
ULRIC VON RUDENZ, his Nephew and Heir.

WERNER STAUFFACHER,
CONRAD HUNN,
ITEL REDING,
HANS AUF DER MAUER,
GEORGE IM-HOFE,
JOCELYN VON WEILER,
ULRIC, the Smith,
} Country people of Schwytz.

WALTER FÜRST,
WILLIAM TELL,
RÖSSELMANN, the Priest,
PETERMANN, the Sacrist,
KUONI, the Herdsman,
WERNI, the Hunter,
RUODI, the Fisherman,
} of Uri.

ARNOLD OF THE MELCHTHAL,
CONRAD BAUMGARTEN,
MEYER VON SARNEN,
STRUTHAN VON WINKELRIED,
NICHOLAS VON DER FLÜE,
BURKHARDT AM BÜHEL,
ARNOLD VON SEWA,
} of Unterwalden.

JOHN, THE PARRICIDE, Duke of Suabia.
PFEIFFER of Lucerne, and KUNZ of Gersau.
WALTER and WILLIAM, Tell's sons.
FRIESSHART and LEUTHOLD, Soldiers.
BULL of Uri, and STÜSSI, the Field-guard.
Task-master, Master-mason, and Workmen, Public Cryer, Charitable Brothers, Peasants.
Gessler's and Landenberger's Horsemen.
Herdsman's and Fisherman's Boys etc.
GERTRUDE, Stauffacher's wife.
HEDWIGE, Tell's wife, and Fürst's daughter.
BERTHA VON BRUNEK, a noble and wealthy heiress.
ARMGART, MECHTILD, ELSBETH, HILDEGARD, and other women and children of the Forest Cantons.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The Lake of the Forest-Cantons with its rocky shores, opposite to Schwyz — The lake forming a bay in the land — A cottage not far from the shore — A fisher-boy in his boat — Away, over the lake, the green pastures, hamlets, and farms, of Schwytz, lying in bright sunshine — On the left of the Spectator the peaks of the Haken envelopped in clouds — On the right, in the far-back ground a chain of ice-mountains — the Kuh-reihen, or herds-march, with the harmony of the herds-bells, heard, around, both before and after the opening of the scene.

FISHER-BOY [singing in his boat].

[Air — "the Kuhreihen, or Ranz des Vaches."]

The Lake, it was smiling round wood, rock, and bay;
Asleep, on its green banks, a Shepherd-boy lay;
There he heard, from below,
Soft musick arise,
Soft as flute o'er the waves,
Or as hymn from the skies. —

But soon, soon he wakes from this dream of the Blest,
For the Flood, wildly splashing, is over his breast,
And a voice cries: "Dear Youth,
With me must thou go!
Thus the shepherd I lure,
Thus I draw him below."

HERDSMAN [on the mountain].

[Variation of the same melody].

Farewell, ye green Meadows,
Farewell, thou bright Shore!
The Alpherd must leave you;
His Summer is o'er.
Yet again will he greet you, again he'll be here,
When the snows melt away, and the flowers reappear;
When the Cuckoo invites him, and songs wake the day,
And brooks, warbling, swell the mild music of May.
Farewell, verdant Pastures,
Farewell, sunny Shore!
The Alpherd must leave you;
His Summer is o'er.

ALPINE HUNTER [from the opposite rocks].

[Second variation of the same air.]

Heaven thunders above, Earth is rocking below,
The Hunter bounds blithe o'er his regions of snow,
O'er storm-chasm'd mountain,
O'er avalanch'd wild,
Where Shrub never blossom'd,
Where Spring never smil'd;
Where a chill Sea of mist, at his feet, darkling lies,
And Men and their dwellings are rapt from his eyes;
Where, through cleft clouds alone,
The dim World is seen,
Or alp-bosom'd wave throws
Its shadow of green.

The landscape changes — A hollow crash is heard from the mountains — Shadows of clouds overspread the region — Ruodi, the fisherman, comes out of his hut — Werni, the hunter, descends from the rocks — Kuoni, the herdsman, advances with a milk-pail on his shoulders, Seppi, his hand-boy, following him.

RUODI [to the Boy in the boat].

Bestir thee, Lad! — In with the boat! — The grey
Old Vale-king comes; the hollow glacier moans;
Stern Mytenstein has donn'd his hood, and cold
From out yon Weatherloch the breezes blow.
— The storm will be upon us ere we think it.

KUONI.

'T will soon be rain. I know it by my Sheep,
They feed so greedily; and see, how Watcher
Is scratching up the dust!

WERNI.

Along the lake
The Fish are springing, and the Water-hen
Dives deep below. A thunder-storm is nigh.

KUONI [to the Boy].

See, Seppi, that the Cattle have not straggled.

SEPPI.

I hear brown Lisel's bell.

KUONI.

Then all is right;
If she is here, the rest are not far off.

RUODI.

Master, you 've got a tuneful ring of bells!

WERNI.

And Cattle to become them—Are they yours?

KUONI.

I'm not so rich — they are my gracious Lord
Of Attinghausens's, and trusted to my care.

RUODI.

Yon Cow, how gracefully she wears her collar!

KUONI.

Ay, that's because she's leader of the herd.
She knows her place; and, were it taken from her,
She'd starve and pine away for very grief.

RUODI.

O, nonsense, nonsense! as if a silly beast—

WERNI.

That's easy said; but beasts have understanding—
Witness our Chamois, who ne'er venture forth
To feed, but one stands sentinel before
The rest, and pricks his ears, and with shrill pipe
Gives instant warning, if the Hunter's nigh.

RUODI [to the Herdsman].

Bound homewards?

KUONI.

Ay, the Alp is eaten bare.

WERNI.

A prosperous journey—

KUONI.

And the same to you!
Yours are not always quite so sure as ours.

RUODI.

But who comes this way, running in such haste?

WERNI.

I know the man—'tis Baumgart of Alzellen.

CONRAD BAUMGARTEN [rushing in breathless].

A boat! for God's sake, Ferryman, your boat!

RUODI.

What, now? Where in such haste —

BAUMGARTEN.

Off with the boat.,
You rescue me from death! Quick, set me over.

KUONI.

Why, man, what ails thee?

WERNI.

Who are thy Pursuers?

BAUMGARTEN [to the Fisherman].

Haste, haste; they are already at my heels!
The Landgrave's horsemen are close after me;
I am a dead man, if they once o'ertake me.

RUODI.

For what do they persue thee?

BAUMGARTEN.

First assist me —
First rescue me, and then I'll tell you all.

WERNI.

There's blood upon thy garments!

BAUMGARTEN.

'T is the Bailiff's —
— The Cæsar's Bailiff's — his — who dwelt at Rotzberg —

KUONI.

What, Wolfenschiessen's! Is it he pursues thee?

BAUMGARTEN.

He 'll not pursue me farther; I have slain him.

ALL [starting back].

The Lord be merciful! what hast thou done?

BAUMGARTEN.

What every Freeman in my place had done!
The honour of my House — my Wife's — mine own —
I have maintain'd against their base Assailer.

KUONI.

Hath then the Bailiff wrong'd thee in thine honour.

BAUMGARTEN.

That he did not accomplish his foul purpose
God, and mine own good axe, alone prevented.

WERNI.

Thou hast done well; who shall arraign the deed?

KUONI.

The Tyrant! he hath met a due reward
For all his cruelties in Unterwalden!

BAUMGARTEN.

But the deed's nois'd abroad — I 'm hot pursued —
E'en whilst we speak — Heavens — how the time is lost!
[It begins to thunder].

KUONI.

Quick, Ferryman, and set the good man over.

RUODI.

Impossible. The storm is close at hand —
Wait till it pass — In truth thou must.

BAUMGARTEN.

Just God!
I cannot wait. The least delay is death.

KUONI [to the Fisherman].

Do it for God's love! Man must assist his fellows;
A like misfortune might betide us all. [Storm with thunder].

RUODI.

The South-wind's up! And see how the Lake rises!
I cannot steer against both wind and wave.

BAUMGARTEN.

So may God bless thee, as thou pityest me!

WERNI.

His life's at stake; have pity on him, Boatman.

KUONI.

He is a House-father—has Wife and Children.
[Repeated bursts of thunder.]

RUODI.

What! have I not, as well, a life to lose?
Have I not Wife and Children, to the heart
As dear as his? Look, how the breakers foam!
In gathering eddies, how the Lake runs round,
Whirling up all its waters from below!
—Full gladly would I save the honest man;
But 't is impossible, and that you know.

BAUMGARTEN.

Thus must I fall into the Tyrant's grasp,
And with a port in sight? Yonder it lies!
Mine eyes behold; my very voice can reach it;
Here is the boat that might convey me over;—
And must I perish thus without an effort?

KUONI.

See, who comes hither?

WERNI.

It is Tell of Bürglen.

Enter TELL with his cross-bow.

TELL.

Who is the man imploring here for help?

KUONI.

'T is an Alzellen man, who, in defence
Of his Wife's honour, hath slain Wolfenschiessen,
The Cæsar's Bailiff—him, who dwelt at Rotzberg—
The Landgrave's horse press close upon his heels.
He wants a passage over, but the Ferryman,
Appall'd at the loud tempest, will not venture.

RUODI.

There 's Tell—he knows to handle oar and rudder—
Let him say, if a passage may be ventur'd.

[Loud peals of thunder—and the lake roaring.]

What! shall I rush into the jaws of hell?
That none but fools would venture—

TELL.

The brave man
Prizes his fellow's safety as his own;
Self is the last, least thought of noble minds.
—Man, trust in God, and succour the opprest.

RUODI.

Nothing's so easy as advice from those,
Who hazard nought in giving it! Here lies
The boat, and yonder roars the lake—

TELL.

The lake—
It may have, pity, but the ~~Land~~grave will not!
—Come, Boatman, venture—

KUONI and WERNI.

Save him, save him, save him!

RUODI.

Were it my Brother, or mine own dear Child,
It could not be. This is St. Simon's day—
There raves the Lake, and will have its oblation.

TELL.

Peace—peace—This is no time for idle talk;
The moments press, the man must be assisted.
—Say, Boatman, wilt thou take him?—

RUODI.

No, not I!

TELL.

In God's name then give me the boat! with this
Weak arm, will I, at least, attempt to save him.

KUONI.

Hah, noble Tell!

WERNI.

That's like a Fellow-hunter!

BAUMGARTEN.

Thou art mine Angel, my Preserver, Tell!

TELL.

I may redeem thee from the Tyrant's power!
To save thee from the storm a mightier arm

Than mine must interpose; yet better 'twere
To fall into God's hand, than Man's—Should casualty
Betide me—Herdsman, bear a word of comfort
To my poor Wife—Tell her, I've done what I
Could not leave undone—[Springs into the boat.]

KUONI [to the Fisherman].

Thou a Steersman—and
Afraid to follow!—

RUODI.

Many a better men
Than I am, or e'er was, would quail to do so.
There are not two like Tell in all the Mountains.

WERNI [hawing ascended a rock].

He 's off already! God help him, noble Swimmer!
See how the frail bark totters in the waves!

KUONI [on the shore].

The flood sweeps over it—I see no more—
Yet stay—'t is there again!—How gallantly
The noble Fellow's working through the breakers.

SEPPI.

The Landgrave's horse are coming down full gallop.

KUONI.

Heavens! so they are! Tell's, Tell's was help in need!
[A Troop of horse enter at full gallop.]

FIRST HORSEMAN.

Give up the murderer, whom you harbour here.

SECOND HORSEMAN.

This way he came; in vain would ye conceal him.

KUONI and RUODI.

What mean you, troopers?

FIRST HORSEMAN [discovering the boat].

The Devil! what do I see!

WERNI [from above].

Is it *he* in the boat, ye seek?—Ride on, ride on;
If you are brisk, perhaps you 'll overtake him!

SECOND HORSEMAN.

Curse on you! He 's escap'd—

FIRST HORSEMAN [to the Herdsman and Fisher].

Ye 've aided him!
But dearly shall ye pay it.—[To the other Horsemen].
Fall upon
Their flocks and herds! Down with their cottages!
[Troopers hasten out.]

SEPPI [rushing out after them].

O my poor lambs! my lambs!

KUONI [following].

Woe's me! my herds!

WERNI.

The Tyrants! the Barbarians!

RUODI [wringing his hands].

Righteous heaven!
When will there rise a Saviour in the land?
[Follows them].

SCENE II.

Steinen in Schwytz — Stauffacher's house, on the high-way near a bridge — A Linden Tree before it.

Enter WERNER STAUFFACHER AND PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE in conversation.

PFEIFFER.

Yes, yes, friend Stauffacher, as I was saying —
Swear not allegiance to the house of Austria,
But hold fast to the Empire, as before:
And God preserve you in your ancient freedom!
[Shakes him heartily by the hand, and is going away.]

STAUFFACHER.

Stay till my Wife comes down — you are my guest
In Schwytz, as I am yours in Lucerne.

PFEIFFER.

Thanks,
Kind friend; but I must be this night at Gersau.
— Whate'er vexations from this Landgrave's pride
And avarice it may be yours to suffer;
Suffer in patience. Things may change; ere long
Another Emperor may fill the throne;
But — Austria's once — Austria's you'll be for ever.
[He goes away — Stauffacher sits down mournfully on a bench under the Linden Tree. — Gertrude, his wife, finds him in this state, and placing herself near, contemplates him for some time in silence.

GERTRUDE.

So grave, my Friend! Why, I no longer know thee.
Day after day have I, in silence, watch'd
The shadows lengthening o'er thy furrow'd brow.
Some secret sorrow preys upon thy heart;
Confide it to me; am I not thy Wife —
Thine own true Wife, thy bosom's dearer Half,

And privileg'd to share in all its griefs?

[Stauffacher extends his hand to her in silence.]

What has oppress'd thine heart? Come, tell it to me.
Blest is thine industry; thy fortune prospers;
Thy barns are full; thy thriving flocks and herds,
And generous steeds, in safety from the hills
Return'd, to winter in their peaceful stalls.
—There stands thy House, as good as any noble's;
New-built of finest timber, and proportion'd
According to exactest rule and fashion;
It's windows gaily glancing in the sun;
It's walls with proud escutcheons quarter'd o'er,
And many a text of wisdom, which the traveller
Still stops to read, and, reading, to admire.

STAUFFACHER.

Fair stands the House, well-fashion'd and well-built,
But ah! the ground, on which we 've built it, trembles.

GERTRUDE.

What means my Werner?

STAUFFACHER.

As, of late, I rested
Beneath this linden shade, with looks intent
Of satisfaction on our finish'd labours,
The Governor, attended by his troop,
Came riding on from Küssnacht. Suddenly
Before this house he halted, and look'd round.
At once I rose and went to welcome him,
Greeting his presence with such courtesies
At best befits a subject to employ
Towards his Sovereign's representative.
"Whose house is this?"—He ask'd (though knowing well
Its owner)—"'T is the Emperor's"—I replied—
"This house, Sir, is the Emperor's, and held

By me in fief"—At this he interrupted me
With—"I am Regent, I am Cæsar here,
And will not that each Peasant-churl shall build
And plant, and riot on the land, as though
Himself were Master; I must interpose
With mine authority to curb such licence."—
—Thus saying, on he rode, whilst I remain'd,
In grief of soul, to ponder o'er his words.

GERTRUDE.

Mine own dear Lord and Husband, wilt thou hear
The honest counsels of a Wife?—Thou knowest
I boast to be the noble Iberg's daughter,
A much-experienc'd man—him have I heard
(As in long nights my sisters and myself
Sat spinning wool)—him have I oftimes heard
With many a chief and elder of the land,
Assembled round our hospitable hearth,
Hold converse sage, expound our ancient charters,
Define the Sovereign's powers, the People's rights,
And all the interests of the common-weal.
Attentively I listen'd, gathering thence
What the judicious thought, the good desir'd,
And garnering up their wisdom in my heart.
Then hearken to me, Werner. I had guess'd
The cause of this disquiet creeping o'er thee—
—The Landgrave is thy foe; he bears thee grudge,
And meditates thy fall; for thou hast been
An hindrance to his projects, the sole cause
Why yet the Schwytzer scorns to bend beneath
An upstart house of princes; but still loyal,
Loyal and true, as his Sire's Sires before him,
Holds fast his charter'd rights, and stands in firm
And unconstrain'd allegiance to the Empire.—
—Guess I not right, my friend?

STAUFFACHER.

It needs must be so—
I know no cause besides for his displeasure.

GERTRUDE.

And yet there is another—Envy—envy
Of thy fair fortunes—Envy to behold thee
A happier, more respected man, than he is—
A freeman on thine own inheritance—
For he hath none—Thou from the Emperor
Hold'st, in free fief, the lands thy fathers left thee,
And durst, if need, assert thy title to them
As proudly as e'er Prince of the whole Empire;
For o'er thee stands no earthly Potentate,
Save one, the highest in all Christendom;
While he—the younger son of a mean house—
(High though he lord it now above his betters)—
Can scarcely call the cloak he wears his own.
Hence, hence his rancour; hence with eye malign
Of jealous hate, he views each good man's fortune.
—Long hath this evil man sworn thy destruction;
As yet thou stand'st unscath'd; but would'st thou wait
Till the bolt strike—'till opportunity
Hath come in aid of ever-watchful vengeance?
—A wise man would anticipate the blow.

STAUFFACHER.

What's to be done?

GERTRUDE.

Thou know'st the discontents,
The ill-pent murmurs which this man's oppression,
His cruelty, and avarice, have provok'd
Amongst all honest hearts in Schwytz; nor doubt
But that in Uri and in Unterwalden,

(Like causes still producing like effects)
They equally are wearied of the yoke.
For, as this Gessler here, his underlings
In boastful imitation of their master
Do play their parts elsewhere. No fishing-boat,
That visits us from yonder shores, but teems
With tidings of fresh insolence and wrong
Inflicted on the people. Let us then
Seize quick advantage of the time; let some
Good man and true cross, instant, to yon shores,—
There to behold the actual state of things;
There haply to consult how best the land
May be deliver'd from the enemy.
God—if I augur true—will not forsake us,
Nor let the cause of right, unheeded, perish.
—Say,—are there none in Uri to advise with?
No ancient guest-friend, into whose calm ear
Thou may'st disburden thy full soul?—

STAUFFACHER.

In Uri
Beats many a noble heart, not less for wisdom,
Than for high faith and fortitude, renown'd—
Hearts worthy of all trust—[Rises up—]
O Gertrude, what a whirlwind of wild thoughts
Thou hast stirr'd up within me; my pent soul
Thou conjur'st forth, all-naked, to the day;
Truths, which I dar'd not whisper, scarce dar'd dream of,
Frank, fearless, and resolv'd, thy tongue proclaims.
—But hath thy heart weigh'd what thy lips thus counsel?—
Thou call'st for war, wild war, and the fierce clang
Of arms, within these peace-accustom'd vales!
Alas! shall we, a nation of poor herdsmen,
Untrain'd to war or warlike exercise,
Bid bold defiance to the world's great Master?

—Besides, 't would but afford him what he seeks,
A pretext to let loose his blood-hounds on us—
To seize our pleasant fields by claim of conquest—
And, under plea of righteous chastisement,
Despoil us of our charter'd liberties!

GERTRUDE.

Ye too are men, each knowing how to wield
His own good axe; and God assists the brave!

STAUFFACHER.

Ah! Gertrude, Gertrude, little reckest thou
War's withering blast; it sweeps off herds and herdsmen.

GERTRUDE.

What Heaven decrees us, we must needs endure;
The noble heart brooks all things but injustice.

STAUFFACHER.

This house in which thou so delightest—War
Will burn it down—

GERTRUDE.

Did I believe this heart
Could e'er become so chain'd to things of earth,
Myself would throw the brand that should destroy it.

STAUFFACHER.

Thou dream'st, too, of humanity in war!—
War spares not e'en the infant in the cradle.

GERTRUDE.

But innocence has still a friend in Heaven.

STAUFFACHER.

We men can perish bravely, sword in hand;
But ah! what fate awaits unhappy woman?

GERTRUDE.

A choice lies open even to the weakest; —
One spring from yonder bridge would set me free.

STAUFFACHER [embracing her].

Who to his bosom claspeth such a heart —
Well may that man contend for hearth and altar;
He fears no power that kings can bring against him.
— Gertrude, farewell! — I 'll instantly to Uri.
There dwells mine ancient guest-friend, Walter Fürst,
Who views these times with the same eyes that we do.
Perchance, too, I may see the noble Banneret
Of Attinghausen — One, though high-descended,
Of simplest manners and the people's friend.
With these will I hold counsel how the land
May best resist the enemy — Farewell —
Your prudence well can manage things at home.
To the poor pilgrim on his holy way,
To the good monk, collecting for his convent,
Give amply and dismiss them well supplied.
Stauffacher's house lies open to the High-road,
A hospitable roof, that never yet
Was clos'd against the weary traveller. —

[Whilst they are retiring, Tell advances with Conrad Baumgarten.]

TELL [to Baumgarten].

You 'll need my aid no farther. In this house
Resides a friend, the noble Stauffacher,
A father to the friendless and opprest.
See, there he is himself — Come, follow me.

[They go towards him — The scene closes.—]

SCENE III.

A public place at Altdorf — On an eminence, in the back ground, a strong building, so far advanced as to shew the form of the whole — A scaffold against the unfinished part on which workmen are seen going up and down — On the top of the roof a slater — Every thing in work and motion. —

TASK-MASTER — MASTER-MASON — AND WORKMEN.

TASK-MASTER [with his staff urging on the workmen].

Be brisk, men! Forward with your work — bring here
The stone — more lime, more mortar, there — despatch,
Despatch, that, when the Governor returns,
He have no cause to tell us we' ve been sleeping —
— You crawl like snails. — [To two of the Workmen —]
What! call you that a load?
Go, double it. Is this the way you earn
Your wages? This the way you serve your master?

FIRST WORKMAN.

'Tis hard to carry stones, and toil like beasts,
And all to build a dungeon for ourselves!

TASK-MASTER.

What! are you muttering? But 'tis like you all —
A base, ungrateful people, fit for nothing
But to milk cows and saunter round the mountains.

AN OLD-MAN [resting himself].

I can no more —

TASK-MASTER [shaking him].

Bestir thyself, old fellow

FIRST WORKMAN.

Have you no pity, no reverence for grey hairs?
To press thus hardly on a poor old man,
Who scarce can drag his own worn limbs along?

MASTER-MASON and WORKMEN.

Shame, shame upon it! Shame—it cries to Heaven!

TASK-MASTER.

Sirs, mind your business—I but do my duty.

SECOND WORKMAN.

Now, master, what's to be the name of this
Strong place which we are building?

TASK-MASTER.

'T will be call'd
The Yoke of Uri! for beneath its vaults
Shall all ye, Uri rebels, bend your necks.

WORKMEN.

The Yoke of Uri!

TASK-MASTER.

What's in that to laugh at?

SECOND WORKMAN.

Wilt thou yoke Uri in this narrow place?

FIRST WORKMAN.

Let 's see, how many of these mole hills, pil'd
One top of th' other, would it take to raise
A mountain equal tho the least in Uri!

[Task-master retires into the back-ground].

MASTER-MASON.

Into the deepest lake I 'll throw the hammer,
With which I 've work'd on this accursed building.

TELL AND STAUFFACHER enter.

STAUFFACHER.

O, had I never liv'd to look on this!

TELL.

No good 's to be found here. Come, let 's away.

STAUFFACHER.

Am I in Uri — in a land of freedom?

MASTER-MASON.

O sir, if you could only see the vaults
Beneath these towers! No fear of early cock-crow
To break the dreams of those, that slumber there!

STAUFFACHER.

O God!

MASTER-MASON.

Look at these flanks, these butresses —
They stand, as if built for eternity!

TELL.

What hands build up, hands may pull down! — But there —
[Pointing to the Mountains]
There stands a house not built by mortal hands
The house of freedom and the house of God!
[A drum is heard — People enter, bearing a hat upon a Pole — A public cryer follows — Women and children press tumultuously after.]

FIRST WORKMAN.

What means the drum? — Attention —

MASTER-MASON.

And the hat?
Some Carnival or Christmas Mummery!

CRYER.

In the great Cæsar's name—

PEOPLE.

Attention! Hear him!

CRYER.

Ye Men of Uri! Look upon this Hat.
It will be set up, on a Pole, in Altdorf,
And 't is the Governor's good will and pleasure,
That every one, who passes, shall bow down—
Yea, with uncover'd head and bended knees—
Bow down, and to this hat like reverence pay,
As to his noble self, if he were present.
—This is his Lordship's Mandate, and the test,
By which our Lord, the Emperor, would try.
His subjects loyalty.—Who disobeys,
Must pay the penalty in goods and person.

[The people laugh out—The drum beats—and the procession passes on.]

FIRST WORKMAN.

Bow to his hat! Who ever heard the like?

MASTER-MASON.

Ay, and with bended knees and naked head!—
Bow to a hat!—Is this a game to play
With worthy and grave men?

FIRST WORKMAN.

Was it the Emperor's!
Was it the Crown!—But the poor hat of Austria!
—I saw it hanging in the Landgrave's hall.

MASTER-MASON.

The hat of Austria! Mark me; 't is a snare,
And set but to betray us.

FIRST WORKMAN.

What true man,
What free-born son of Uri, would submit
To such humiliation?

MASTER-MASON.

Come, let 's go
And talk it over with our fellows.—[They retire.]

TELL [to Stauffacher].

Now you know all. So farewell, Master Werner.

STAUFFACHER.

Where, in such haste? Nay, leave us not so soon.

TELL.

My house requires its father's eye—Farewell.

STAUFFACHER.

My heart 's so full—I have so much to tell you.

TELL.

The heavy heart will not grow light with talking.

STAUFFACHER.

But words might lead to acts—

TELL.

Our wisest acts
In times like these, are silence and submission.

STAUFFACHER.

And must we suffer things insufferable?

TELL.

These hasty Governors ne'er govern long,
—When the fierce South breathes from his dark abyss,
Our fires we' at once extinguish; to their havens
Swift fly our boats; and harmless o'er the void
The unresisted spirit wings his way.—
Our hearths, at least, may yield us tranquil shelter—
Peace to the peaceful seldom is denied.

STAUFFACHER.

Think'st thou so?—Time may chance to undeceive thee.

TELL.

The adder stings not 'till he is provok'd.
These men, if disregarded, will, ere long
Themselves grow weary of their own misdoings.

STAUFFACHER.

Much might be done, did we but act in concert.

TELL.

In Shipwreck each swims safest by himself.

STAUFFACHER.

Canst thou thus coldly view the common danger?

TELL.

He reckons best, who reckons on himself.

STAUFFACHER.

By union e'en the weakest become mighty.

TELL.

But the strong man is strongest when alone.

STAUFFACHER.

Alas! And cannot we then count on Tell?
Opprest, despairing, in defence of all
That man holds dearest, shall the Fatherland
Call for Tell's arm, and call for it in vain?

TELL [giving him his hand].

Tell draws the lost lamb from the precipice;
And think'st thou he'd abandon his dear friends?
Yet still — whate'er ye do — omit me from
Your councils; I 'm no man of words, I deal not
In long deliberation and debate. —
But when you have resolv'd on your straight course,
And stand prepar'd for action — call on Tell —
And Tell will not be wanting in his duty.

[Tell and Stauffacher quit the stage on different sides — Immediately [after, a sudden tumult is heard around the scaffold.]

MASTER-MASON.

What is it?

FIRST WORKMAN [hastening forwards].

The slater 's fallen from the roof.

BERTHA [rushing in].

Is he not dash'd to pieces? Run, help, help him,
If help be possible — Save him, here is gold —
[Throws her trinkets amongst the crowd].

MASTER-MASON.

Ay, gold, dear gold — the universal balm —
The grand specific for all earthly evil!
Tear Sires from children, husbands from their wives,
Bring strife and woe and death into the land,
And gold, ye think, will compensate for all!
We were a happy people, ere ye came;
Now all is desolation and despair.

BERTHA [to the task-master].

Is he alive? [Task-master shakes his head.]
O miserable towers,
With curses built, and to long curses doom'd!

SCENE IV.

Walter Fürst's dwelling — He and Arnold Melchthal enter the same time from opposite sides of the stage.

MELCHTHAL.

Good Master Fürst —

WALTER FÜRST.

Take heed — You 'll be surpriz'd —
We are beset with spies.

MELCHTHAL.

Have you no news
From Unterwalden? Nothing from my father?
This horrible suspense I can endure
No longer — I must see him — What's my crime?
What have I done, that, like a murderer,
I should be pent up here? I did but break

A saucy Varlet's finger, who had unyok'd
My beauteous team of oxen, from the plough,
And would have driven them off before my face.

WALTER FÜRST.

You are too rash. The servant was the Governor's,
And acted by direction of his master.
Whate'er the cause alleg'd—how hard soe'er
The penalty—we must submit in silence.

MELCHTHAL.

But who could brook the fellow's insolence?
"Peasants"—(such was the Hireling's taunt)—"Peasants,
That would eat bread may drag the plough themselves."
—And then it cut me to the soul to see
The oxen, faithful creatures—when the knave
Unyok'd them—how they butted with their horns,
And lowed and moan'd so piteously, as though
Themselves were conscious of their master's wrongs.
—I had no longer curb upon myself,
And—overcome by passion—struck the villain.

WALTER FÜRST [aside].

It is not easy to subdue ourselves;
And who could blame an ardent youth as he is?

MELCHTHAL.

Mine only care is now about my Father;
He needs attention; and his son's away.
The Governor, too, 'is his enemy, because
He always hath stood up for right and freedom.
I fear they will bear hard upon the dear
Old man, now I 'm away, and there are none
To help him.—Come what will, I must cross over.

WALTER FÜRST.

Have but a few hours patience; wait awhile
For tidings from the Forest.—Hark!—a knock!
—Perhaps, some servant from the Governor—
Go in—away, away—you are not safe
From Landenberger's arm even here in Uri.
—These tyrants, as by instinct, aid each-other.

MELCHTHAL.

And teach us freemen what *we* ought to do!

WALTER FÜRST.

In—in—I 'll call you, when the coast is clear.
[Melchthal goes in].
Poor youth! I dare not tell him all the evil
Which my suspicion whispers.—Who knocks there?
—At every knock I tremble, as in dread
Of some dark tidings. Treachery and suspicion
Are lurking round in every hole and corner:
Into our houses' innermost recesses
These underlings of power do work their way;
Our doors will soon be needing bolts and bars.
[Opens the door, and starts back surprized at seeing Werner Stauffacher.]
—Whom do I see!—What, Werner, you!—By Heavens,
A worthy, a dear guest—No better man
E'er cross'd this threshold. Welcome to my roof.—
—What brings you here?—Or what seek you in Uri?

STAUFFACHER [shaking him by the hand].

The good old times and good old Switzerland!

WALTER-FÜRST.

Which you bring with you!—Why, I grow young again—
My h[illegible] at the very sight of you.—
—[illegible]end; and tell us how you left

The Lady Gertrude, your agreeable wife,
The worthy daughter of the noble Iberg,
There 's not a traveller from the German land,
Passing by Meinrad's Cell towards Italy,
But tells us of your hospitable home. [Stauffacher sits down]
—Straight from Fluelen?—Or tarrying to look round
At things in Altdorf?

STAUFFACHER.

It needs no long time
To learn what's doing there—Alas! I have seen
More than I ever thought to see in Uri.

WALTER FÜRST.

There, Friend! you have it at a glance—
[Pointing out of window.]

STAUFFACHER.

A prison!
Why, such a thing was never known in Uri—
Your only strong-hold here has been the Grave!

WALTER FÜRST.

And that should be its name.—'T will prove, I fear,
The Grave of freedom.

STAUFFACHER.

Woe to us!—Oppression
I left at home! oppression I find here.
Alas! Our wrongs become intolerable,
And, what is worse, I see no limit to them.
From earliest times the Switzer has been free,
And unaccustom'd but to mildest sway;
There has been nothing like our present treatment—
—Never—since shepherd first drove flock to mountain.—

WALTER-FÜRST.

Yes, 't is without example; our good Lord

Of Attinghausen, who has seen old times,
Thinks, that it cannot be endur'd much longer.

STAUFFACHER.

You know what has occurr'd in Unterwalden!
Young Wolffenschiessen—he, who rul'd at Rotzberg—
Whilst, with brute force, assailing Baumgart's wife,
Was by the indignant husband slain—

WALTER FÜRST.

Baumgart!
What Baumgart of Alzellen? A discreet
And honest man! I trust he is in safety.

STAUFFACHER.

Your son-in-law convey'd him o'er the lake,
And I have since conceal'd his steps in Steinen.
—But there is yet a darker tale from Sarnen—
A tale, that chills one's very blood to think of.

WALTER FÜRST [eagerly].

Say on, what is it?

STAUFFACHER.

There late dwelt in Melchthal—
—Just as you enter by the road from Kerns—
A righteous man, nam'd Henry of the Halden—
A man of weight and wisdom in the council.

WALTER FÜRST.

Who knows him not? But what has happen'd to him?
On with your tale.

STAUFFACHER.

It seems, his son had struck
A servant of the Governor's, and fled
The Canton—

WALTER FÜRST [in great agitation].

But the Father! What of him?

STAUFFACHER.

The Landvogt had him seiz'd and dragg'd to Sarnen,
Demanding at his hands the absent Son—
—He should produce the Son or suffer for him—
In vain the old Man pleaded ignorance,
His utter ignorance of the Son's retreat—
—The Torturers were call'd in—

WALTER FÜRST
[springing forward and trying to draw him on one side]—

Hush, hush! no more.

STAUFFACHER [with increasing energy].

"—Though the Son has escap'd me, *thou* shalt not—"
Exclaim'd the Tyrant; then had him thrown to earth,
And the sharp Steel driven into both his eyes—

WALTER FÜRST.

Merciful Heaven!

MELCHTHAL [rushing out].

Into his eyes—said you?

STAUFFACHER (to Walter Fürst].

Who is the Youth?

MELCHTHAL [laying hold of him with convulsive grasp].

Into his eyes?

STAUFFACHER.

Who is he?
[Walter Fürst makes a sign to him.]
Is it his Son? All-righteous Heaven!

MELCHTHAL.

And I—
To be so far away!—Into his eyes?

WALTER FÜRST.

Restrain thyself—Endure it like a Man!

MELCHTHAL.

And all on my account! All for my crime!
—Blind?—Actually blind?—Bereft of sight?

STAUFFACHER.

Even so—with grief I speak it—even so.
His Fount of light extinguish'd!—Never more
Will he behold the Sun's delightful beams—

WALTER FÜRST.

O, spare his anguish!

MELCHTHAL.

Never, never more!
[Presses his hands before his eyes and is silent for a momen
then goes from one to the other, and speaks in a subdued vc
half-choked with tears—
O Light! Light is a noble gift of Heaven!
All Creatures live by light—All happy Creatures—
The lowliest Plant turns joyful to its rays.
And *He* must sit in darkness, grope his way
In ever-during night! The bloom of Flowers,
The Meadow's green, the Glacier's roseate hues,
To him for ever lost!—To die—to die
Is nothing; but to live this living death—
To live and see not—this is woe indeed.
—Why, do ye look so piteously on *me*?
I, I have two young Eyes; and yet can give
My poor blind Father neither! Not one gleam

From the fierce flood of Light, that now o'erwhelms
Mine aching sense, can I impart to him.

STAUFFACHER [to Walter Fürst].

Alas! poor Youth, that I—instead of soothing—
Must farther aggravate his griefs!—[To Melchthal]
Thy Father—
He doth indeed demand thy kindest care—
Blind, naked, exil'd from his home.—Of all
His worldly Goods—Flocks, Lands, and House—of all
That once were his, the Enemy hath left
Him nothing—nothing but his Staff, with which
He gropes his wandering way from door to door.

MELCHTHAL.

Nought but his Staff left tho the poor old Man!
Exil'd from his own hearth, and robb'd of Light,
The common portion of God's meanest Creatures!
Now talk no more of patience—counsel not
My further stay;—I 've stay'd too long already,
Wretch, dastard, that I was! Intent alone
On mine own safety, and neglecting his—
Leaving alas! that dear white Head expos'd
And hostage to the Tyrant! Out base Caution,
Out coward Fears! Henceforth no thoughts be mine
Save thoughts of bloody recompense and vengeance!
—I 'll to the Tyrant straight—no powers shall stay me—
Demanding at his hands my Father's eyes—
Amidst his servile horde I 'll track him out;
What's death to me, so in the Monster's life-blood
I might but slake my burning agony? [Is going off.]

WALTER-FÜRST [detaining him.]

What can thy Sword, thy single Arm, against him?
On Sarnen's heights secure, he laughs to scorn
The puny indignation of his Foes.

MELCHTHAL.

And did he dwell in Schreckhorn's icy palace,
Or higher still, where, spher'd in Realms of Air,
Eternal Jungfrau veils her mystic Throne,
This Arm should reach him! Ay with twenty Youths,
Resolv'd as I am, I 'd burst his Strong-Hold,
And hurl him headlong, howling, to his doom.
—But, if ye none dare follow me—if sunk
In care of Huts and herds, ye choose to bow
Beneath the Tyrant's yoke—I 'll to the Mountains,
I 'll wake the free-born Spirit of the Alps,
Call forth the Goatherds from their slumbering Rocks,
And, under the blue Canopy of Heaven,
(Where Thought is free, and Judgement pure) will I
Arraign the Tyrant, and denounce his crimes,
'Till all true Hearts shall echo to my wrongs.

STAUFFACHER [to Fürst].

The storm is gathering fast; shall we up now,
Or wait the Extremity?

MELCHTHAL.

What, what Extremity
Have we to dread, when e'en within its socket
The Eye of Man no longer rests secure?
Or are we powerless? Have we learn'd in vain
To draw the Bow, to wield the ponderous Axe?
—There 's not a Creature under Heaven, how mild
Or weak soe'er his Nature, but will find
Some weapon in despair. Sore-press'd the Stag
Turns with fierce antlars on his Foe, and holds
The trembling Pack at bay: The struggling Chamois
Oft drags the Hunter down the precipice,
Himself, his Foe, in one deep doom immerg'd:
Nay, the Plough-Ox, that gentle Friend of Man

Who bends his patient strength beneath the yoke,
Springs up, when irritated, whets his horn,
And whirls his base Assaillant to the Skies.

WALTER FÜRST.

If the three Cantons thought, as *we* three do,
Our efforts might indeed accomplish something.

STAUFFACHER.

If Uri call, and Unterwalden answer;
Schwytz—Schwytz will not forget the old Alliance.

MELCHTHAL.

I' ve many Friends in Unterwalden, and
Not one, but in the cause would freely stake
Land, limb, or life, were he assur'd of others.—
Ready to follow, though afraid to lead,
Each waits but for his Fellow to begin.
Fair Opportunity, or brave Example
Is all that's needed to call forth their efforts.
—And will ye grant them neither? O just Men
Sage Fathers of your Country, deign to hear me.
Youth 'though I be, unknown to fame or fortune,
O let not your Experience scorn my counsels.
No fitful tempest of young Blood, but Grief's,
Grief's awfully o'erwhelming Tide, impels me.
—Ye have yourselves been Sons; ye now are Fathers,
And would have your own Sons to reverence
Their Sires, e'en as ye 've reverenc'd *yours*—would have them
To stand by you in sorrow and old age,
And guard your sacred heads from death or danger.
Oh!—because Ye yourselves have not yet suffer'd
In land or limb—because your Eye-balls yet
Free and undimm'd, within their orbits, move—
Oh! be not, therefore, Strangers to my wrong!

E'en now the Tyrant's Sword hangs over you;
Ye have denounc'd proud Austria's usurpations;
(Such and no greater was my Father's Crime!)
Ye have partaken of my Father's guilt,
And stand, like him, in equal condemnation.

STAUFFACHER [to Fürst).

Do *thou* resolve!—I am prepar'd to follow.

WALTER FÜRST.

Let's first consult the Lords of Sillinen
And Attinghausen. Their high Names alone
Would call up Hundreds in the common cause.

MELCHTHAL.

Where are there Names, in all the Forest Mountains,
More worthy of respect than thine—and thine—
Rich in your Father's Virtues and your own?—
—What need of Nobles?—Let us do the work
Without them.—Had we been alone, we should
Have learn'd, ere this, how to redress ourselves—

STAUFFACHER.

Our Nobles suffer not the wrongs that we do:
The Torrent, which now rages o'er the plains,
Hath not yet reach'd the heights; but still their aid,
—Were we in arms—would not be wanting to us.

WALTER FÜRST.

Were there an Umpire betwixt us and Austria
Our wrongs might be redress'd, our rights restablish'd
Without or war or blood; yet he, who best
Had heal'd the strife—our Emperor and Judge—
'T is HE, that most embroils it.—
So must we trust to God and our own arm!—
—Do *thou*, then, sound thy Men of Schwytz; *I* will

Find Friends in Uri.—Whom shall we, meanwhile,
Despatch to Unterwald.

MELCHTHAL.

Be Unterwald
My care—whom else doth it concern more nearly?

WALTER FÜRST.

No, Melchthal; Thou 'rt my Guest, and I stand pledg'd
For thy security.

MELCHTHAL.

This once indulge me:
I know each Forest-tract, each Rocky-pass,
Alpherd's or Hunter's haunt by Stream and Mountain;
And want not Friends to shelter and assist me.

STAUFFACHER.

Nay, thwart him not; there breathes no Traitor there—
So thoroughly is Tyranny abhorr'd,
She hath no Instruments, in Unterwalden.
—The' Alzellen Man will also be assisting
To find us Friends amidst the lower Vallies.

MELCHTHAL.

Where shall we meet—or how communicate—
So' as not to wake the Tyrant's jealous Eye?

STAUFFACHER.

Might we not meet at Treib or Brunnen?—

WALTER-FÜRST.

No;—
We dare not go to work so openly.—
Hear my advice. Left of the Lake, as you
Descend to Brunnen, lies a lonely Spot,
Once forming part of the surrounding Forest;
But now—its Trees uprooted—turn'd to Meadow,

And hence by neighbouring Herdsmen call'd the BÜTLI—
There, just where our two Boundaries meet, [to Melchthal]
And [nought
Save the brief Strait divides them both from Schwytz—
—There let us hold our Midnight councils; there—
Each bringing with him ten brave Men and true—
Consult how best we may proceed, how best
Uphold our threaten'd Rights, an (God assisting)
Bring all our present ills to a' happy end!—

STAFFACHER.

Even so! and now give me your honest Hands—
—Thine, Walter,—Melchthal, thine [all three knit hands]
And as we three
Firm, strenuous, without fear or guile, knit hands
And hearts in one,—so, warm'd by our Example,
May the three Cantons—*Uri*—*Schwytz*—*Unt'walden*
Join in Like League—prepar'd, like us, to stand
Or fall together—one in life and death!

WALTER FÜRST and MELCHTHAL.

In life and death!
[They all three hold hands and stand together for some time in silence.]

MELCHTHAL.

Alas! my blind old father,
Thou can'st no more behold the Day of Freedom,
But thou shalt hear it—when from Alp to Alp
The flaming Beacons rise—When, crush'd beneath
A thousand Arms, Tyrannic-Power's Stronghold
Hath sunk in atoms, to thy lowly Cot
Exulting shall the rescued Swiss repair;
Tell thee of Rights regain'd, of Freedom won,
From thy calm'd brows half-chase the Shades of Night,
And bless thy Souls-eye with redoubled Day!—[Exeunt.]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Castle of Attinghausen — A Gothic Hall decorated with Helmets and Escutcheons — The Baron, a grey-headed old Man of eighty-five, of high and noble stature, clad in a fur-mantle and resting on a staff, headed with Chamois-horn — Kuoni and six other Servants, standing round him with rakes and scythes — Ulric von Rudenz entering in a knights Dress —

RUDENZ.

Here am I, Uncle, — What 's your wish?

ATTINGHAUSEN.

First let me,
After the ancient custom of our House,
Partake the Morning's Draught with these, my Children
[Drinks and passes the cup to those around him —]
Time was, 'till late, that into the fresh Field
Or Forest-glen, the Master's Eye went with them
Glancing around, like Banner in the battle,
To animate and guide their honest labours;
But now, past out-door use, I needs must sit
Content at home, and play the Steward's part.
Nor Morn's nor Evening's Suns now visit me,
And I no more can seek them on the Mountains;

And thus, in narrow and still narrower circle,
I move on to the narrowest and the last,
Where Life—diminish'd to a point—stands still.

KUONI [offering Rudenz the cup].

I pass it to you, young Sir—[Rudenz hesitates to take it].
Drink! We have
But one Cup and one Heart.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Go, Children, go;
And when the Evening comes and Work is o'er,
—Then will we talk about old Switzerland.
[Exeunt Kuoni and Servants.]

ATTINGHAUSEN AND RUDENZ.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Belted and plum'd, and all thy bravery on!
Thou would'st to Altdorf—to the Governors?

RUDENZ.

Yes, Uncle, and I must delay no longer.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

What, in such haste! Is thy Youth's time so precious,
Thou can'st not spare an hour to thine old Uncle?

RUDENZ.

I see my presence is not needed here—
Long have I been an Alien in this House.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

[After having surveyed him for some time with attention.]

Yes!—With regret I speak it—thou hast been so.
Ah! Uly, Uly, I no longer know thee.

So prankt with gilt and plumes and purple finery
Thou strut'st forth like a Peacock in our Vallies,
Despising every homebred, homelier Bird.
From the poor Peasant's smile thou turnst avay.
As if asham'd to meet his honest welcomes.

RUDENZ.

All due regard I willingly concede him;
The rights, he arrogates, I must deny.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Our Country groans beneath the Tyrant's scourge,
And every honest Hearth o'erflows with anguish—
Thee, thee alone, the universal grief
Affects not—thee, apostate from the cause
Of Freedom—leagued with Freedom's direst Foes—
Wooing the harlot pleasures of a Court—
Hanging on Prince's smiles and favours—whilst
Thy once-lov'd Country bleeds at every vein!

RUDENZ.

The Land is sore-oppress'd—I know it, Uncle—
But why?—And who have plung'd her in these Straights?
One word—one easy word—would set her free,
And crown us with a gracious Master's love.
Woe to the Traitors, who delude the People—
Who, for their own base interests, would deter them
From joining with adjacent States in frank
And due allegiance to the House of Austria.
Oh! doubt not, things best please them as they are!
To riot, cost-free, at their Nobles' tables
And *call* the Cæsar Master!—Which, they know,
Is tantamount to having none at all.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Must I hear this, and hear it from thy mouth?

RUDENZ.

Nay, 't was your seeking, Sir;—So hear me out.
—What is the part which you yourself are playing?
Have you no higher pride than to reign here
The Shepherd Lord, the Village Functionary?
How! Is it not a nobler choice to shine
In Camps and Courts and Halls of Chivalry,
Associate of brave Knights, and owing fealty
And homage none, save to one Princely Master,
Than sit at home, the Peer of your own Servants,
And share the justice-seat with Churls and Peasants?

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Ah! Uly, Uly, the Seducer's voice
Hath entrance found in thy too easy heart!

RUDENZ.

Sir, I deny it not, that in my soul
—Deep in my soul—I feel our degradation.—
To be the Scoff of Strangers—to be call'd
"The Peasant-Nobless"—No, I can't endure it!
And then—to think—whilst Europe's noblest Youth
Are gathering Laurels under Habsburg's banner,
That I should, passive, stay ad home—should waste
In mute day-labour, in inglorious ease,
The Springtide of Life's-years!—That, whilst around
High Deeds are doing—whilst across yon Mountains
A World of Glory glances on the sight—
My shield and Helm hang rusting in these Halls!
—No War-trump's stirring sound, no Herald's call
To Tourny or bright feat of arms, e'er wakes
These lonely Vales;—where nought is heard, instead.
But lowing Kine, and everlasting Cow-songs,
And tinkling Herds-bell's still-responsive Chimes—
One drowsy, drear Monotony of Sound!—

Thought — acted — have gone down into the grave.
My Generation is pass'd by; but — bless'd
Be God! — I shall not live to see the new one.

SCENE II.

A Meadow surrounded with Cliffs and Forests — On the Rocks Steps and Ladders, by which Country-People are seen descending — In the Back-ground the Lake, and above it a Rainbow of the Moon—High Hills with higher Ice-Mountains projecting behind the Rocks — The Lake and Glaciers shining in the Moonlight.

MELCHTHAL, BAUMGARTEN, WINKELRIED, MEIER OF SARNEN, BURKHARDT AM BÜHEL, ARNOLD OF SEWA, KLAUS VON DER FLÜE, and four other Country-People, all armed.

MELCHTHAL [from without].

The Mountain Pass is open; follow me.—
I see the Rock, and little Cross upon it;
Here is our place of Meeting; this is Rütli.
[They enter with Torches.]

WINKELRIED.

Hush!

SEWA.

All is clear.

MEIER.

We' are first — we Unterwaldners.

MELCHTHAL.

—How goes the Hour of Night?—

BAUMGARTEN.

The Fire-watcher
From Selisberg has just call'd two.
[A Bell heard in the distance].

MEIER.

Hush! Listen!

AM-BÜHEL.

The bell for Matins, in the Forest-chapel,
Chimes sweetly, o'er the Midnight wave, from Schwytz.

VON DER FLÜE.

The air is clear and wafts each sound afar.

MELCHTHAL.

Go, some, and fire the brush-wood, that the Flame
May blaze up cheerly 'gainst our Comrades come.
[Two of the Country-People go out.]

SEWA.

It is a lovely Moonlight, and the Lake
Shines bright and tranquil, as a polish'd Mirror.

AM-BÜHEL.

They 'll have an easy passage over—

WINKELRIED.

Hah!
Look thither!—See you nothing?

MEIER.

What? — Ay, truly!
A Rainbow in the middle of the Night!

MELCHTHAL.

'T is form'd by the reflection of the Moon.

VON DER FLÜE.

'T is a strange sight, and such as few have witness'd.

SEWA.

'T is doubled! See a paler one above it.

BAUMGARTEN.

What Bark is that, which glides so smoothly under?

MELCHTHAL.

'T is Stauffacher's! I knew the honest Fellow
Would not delay us long. [Goes with Baumgarten to the shore.]

MEIER.

The Men of Uri
Seem tardiest.

AM-BÜHEL.

They must wind through the Mountains,
Not to awake the Governor's suspicions.

MELCHTHAL [on the shore].

Who goes there? Give the word!

STAUFFACHER [from below].

Friends of their Country.

[All go down to meet the New-comers.]

STAUFFACHER, ITEL REDING, AUF-DER-MAUER, IM-HOFE, CONRAD HUNN, ULRIC, the Smith, JOCELYN OF WEILER, and four others, come out of the Boat, all armed.

VOICES [on the shore].

Welcome! All welcome!

Whilst the Rest remain below, greeting each other, MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER come forwards.

MELCHTHAL.

Stauffacher, I have seen him,
Seen him, who could not look on me again!
I 've laid my hand upon his burning brow,
And, from the orbs of his extinguish'd eyes,
Drawn in fresh flames of never-dying Vengeance.

STAUFFACHER.

Talk not of Vengeance!—'T is not to avenge
Past wrongs, but prevent new, that we are here.
—Now tell us what is done in Unterwalden.—
How stand the People—and how you yourself
Have scap'd the watchful fury of the Foe?

MELCHTHAL.

Winding through Surenen's lone chain of Mountains,
(With everlasting Ice-fields stretch'd around,
And the hoarse Vulture screaming o'er my head),
On to the Alp-Drift, where assembling Shepherds
From Engleberg and Uri greet each other,
And yearly drive their Flocks to common Pasture,
I work'd my passage,—with the milky juice,
That ooz'd adown the Glacier's frothy breast,
My thirst allaying, and for casual shelter
Indebted to some Alpherd's summer shed

Myself sole Guest and Entertainer—'till,
Descending thence, with cautious step, I reach'd
The cottag'd Glens and social Haunts of Men.
—Already had the Tale of my afflictions
Gone forth into the Vales, forestalling for me,
Where'er I pass'd, compassionate regard
With burning indignation at my wrongs.
For true—
True as yon Alp to its own native Flowers
True as the Torrent to its Rocky-Bed,
Or Clouds and Winds to their appointed Track;
The Switzer cleaves to his accustom'd Freedom,
Holds fast the Rights and Laws his Fathers left him,
And spurns the Tyrant's innovating sway.
—O! had you heard their kindly welcomes—seen
The honest zeal of their o'erflowing Hearts!—
Their Hands sprang forth to mine—their inmost Souls
Spake in their eyes; and as I nam'd those names
So dear in all the Forest-Mountains—*thine*
And *Walter Fürst's*—their transports knew no bounds;
Their very Swords seem'd leaping from the Walls—
Not one but swore obedience to your counsels—
But swore to follow you in life and death!
—Thus on, from Cot to Cot, from Glen to Glen,
(In Hospitality's kind rights secure)
I pass'd into my native Vale, and found
My Father—(but why pain you with my griefs?)
Found him alas! blind, robb'd of all, subsisting
On Neighbour's charity—

STAUFFACHER.

Great God!

MELCHTHAL.

And yet—
And yet I wept not.—Not in weak complaints

Did I indulge the fury of my Grief;
Deep in my Heart's core, as some cherish'd Treasure,
I press'd it down, and only thought of deeds.
—I crept through all the windings of the Mountains;
No Chalêt so remote, but I explor'd it.
Far as the Glacier's misty base I sped,
Found human Dwellings, and *one* soul in all!
For still, at Vegetation's farthest verge,
Where the forc'd Soil scarce yields them scantiest bread,
The Tyrant's grasp had been upon the Land,
And made their little less.—I told mine Errand,—
And—one and all—with heart and hand—they 're ours.—

STAUFFACHER.

Much in brief time hast thou achiev'd!

MELCHTHAL.

Nay, more.
Thou knowest Sarnen—one of the Strong-Holds,
From which—o'erawing all—the Enemy,
Like Eagle from his Eyrie, pounces down
And holds in tribute the subjacent Vales—
With mine own eyes have I explor'd its Towers.

STAUFFACHER.

What! didst thou venture in the Tiger's den?

MELCHTHAL.

Disguis'd in Pilgrim's weeds I ventur'd thither.
Nay, more—I saw the Landvogt at his revels—
Judge now, how far I can subdue myself—
I saw the Monster, and I did not slay him!
[In the mean time the others come forward and join their Comrades].

STAUFFACHER.

In truth has Fortune smil'd upon thy daring!—

—But now, inform me of our Comrade's names;
Make me acquainted with the honest Men,
That we may, unreserv'd, approach each other,
And open our free Hearts in friendly council.

MEIER.

Who, throughout the three Cantons, knows not you, Sir?
—I 'm Meier of Sarnen; this my Sister's Son,
Struthan of Winkelried—

STAUFFACHER.

No unknown Name—
It was a Winkelried that slew the Dragon
By th' Hamlet-Fen, and in the desperate struggle
Left his own life.

WINKELRIED.

That was my Grandsire, Sir.

MELCHTHAL [pointing out two Country-People].

These, Sir, are Men belonging to the Convent
Of Engleberg, and dwell behind the Forest.
You 'll not despise them for their humble station
And want of Heritage as ours; they love
Their Country, and are Men of honest name.

STAUFFACHER [giving them his hand].

Integrity is found in every station.

CONRAD HUNN [to Meier].

This is Sir Reding, our late Landamman.

MEIER.

I know him well. We long have had dispute
Together, about Lands in Unterwalden.—

Sir Reding, in the Law-court we are Foes—
Here, Friends and Brothers—[Shaking him by the hand.]

STAUFFACHER.

That 's bravely spoken!

WINKELRIED.

Hark! hark! They come! Hark to the Horn of Uri!
[Right and left are seen armed Men descending with torches.]

AUF DER MAUER.

Look! Is not that God's pious Servant with them?
—Their worthy Priest?—No terrors of the Night,
No pains or perils of the Way, deter him.
A truer Pastor never folded Flock.

BAUMGARTEN.

The sacrist follows him—and Walter Fürst—
I wonder Tell is not among the number.

Enter WALTFR FÜRST,—RÖSSELMANN, the Priest, PETERMANN, the Sacrist,—KUONI, the Herdsman, WERNI, the Hunter,—RUODI, the Fisherman,—and Five others,—making altogether, with those previously assembled, Thirty-three Men.

[They all come forward and station themselves around the Fire.]

WALTER FÜRST.

Thus must we, on our own Inheritance—
On our old Father-soil—steal forth, like Murderers!
Thus must *we*, whose intents are pure and upright,
And best befitting openest place and time,
Wear Treason's Mask, and fain assert in darkness
Rights, clear and quenchless as the Soul of Day!

MELCHTHAL.

It matters not. The Woof, now spun in Night,
Shall soon wave forth in radiance to the Morn.

RÖSSELMANN.

Confederates! Give me a Moment's hearing.
— We stand assembled in one common Cause,
The Forest-Cantons' Representatives;
Then, act as best becomes our holy calling,
Postponing private ends to public Justice;
And still, through all, inviolate preserving
(Even as in times of peace) the Laws and Customs —
The good old Laws and Customs — of our Country.
— Whate'er of novelty be in the Meeting
Or inconsistence with strict Law — the Time's
Necessity must needs excuse. — But GOD
Is every where: HIS Aid, if truly sought,
Will not be wanting in our Councils — not
Less instant here — with Floods, Snows, Mountains, Rocks,
And Forests, round, and Heaven's bright Stars above us —
Than in proud Senate-Hall or court of Princes.

STAUFFACHER.

Ay! — And what surer guidance can we follow
Than the Examples of our brave Forefathers?
Night though it be, our Cause shines clear as Day.

MELCHTHAL.

Though few in number here, we speak the voice
Of absent Thousands; all true Hearts are with us.

CONRAD HUNN.

We 've not old Books and Charters here at hand;
But their Contents are graven on our Souls.

RÖSSELMANN.

Now let us form a Circle with our Swords.

AUF DER MAUER.

Let the Landamman take his place.

SACRIST.

Here are
Three Cantons met. To which shall it belong
To give a Chief to our united Councils?

MEIER.

Let Schwytz contest the palm with Uri. — We
Of Unterwalden cheerfully resign it.

MELCHTHAL.

We urge no claims; we are but Suppliants here,
Invoking aid of our more powerful Neighbours.

STAUFFACHER.

Let Uri take the Sword; her Banner always
Precedes ours in the Empire —

WALTER FÜRST.

No — let Schwytz;
For *all* may boast to be of *her* old Race.

RÖSSELMANN.

Let me decide the generous rivalry —
Uri shall lead in battle, Schwytz in council.

WALTER FÜRST [to Stauffacher].

Then take your post.

STAUFFACHER.

No — there are Elders present;

There 's Itel Reding, our late Landamman;
Where would you find a fitter Man than he is?

WALTER FÜRST.

I move that Reding be our Landamman.—
All, that agree with me, hold up your hands!
[All hold up their right hands.]

REDING [advancing into the middle].

I have no Book to lay my hand upon;
But by yon everlasting Stars I swear
To do my duty without fear or favour.

[They set up two Swords before, and form a Circle round, him — "Schwytz" in the middle — "Uri" on the right — and "Unterwalden" on the left.]

REDING [resting on his Battle-Sword].

Now state your purposes.—Confederates! Say,
Why at this ghostly hour, on this wild Shore,
The Forest-States have met in secret council.
Explain the precise purport of your Meeting;
And what shall be the terms of this new League,
We seek, with God's assistance, to establish?

STAUFFACHER [stepping into the Circle].

We seek not to establish a *new* League,
But to restore the *old* one of our Fathers.
For know, Confederates!—Know that our *three* Nations,
(Howe'er by Lake or Mountain now disparted,
And govern'd, each by its own separate Laws)
Were erst but *one*—sprung of one blood and lineage,
And spread abroad from the same common Country.

WINKELRIED.

Is it then true, as Shepherd's songs have told us,
That we came hither, all from one same Land?

Inform us what you know, that thus our League
—Our new League—may be strengthen'd by the old.

STAUFFACHER.

Hear what our ancient Herdsmen have narrated.
There once liv'd in the North a mighty People,
By famine sore-oppress'd. In their distress
It was resolv'd that each tenth Citizen,
By lot, should leave his Fatherland.—'T was done;
And wailing—Men and Women—forth they far'd—
A numerous Host—into the farther South,
Slashing their battle-way through Germany
E'en to the Forest-Mountains and wild Vales,
Where swift Muotta joins the Lake below.—
No traces of Humanity were there,
No haunt or sign of Man, save one rude Hut,
Where a lone Fisher sat to watch the Ferry:
But the Lake rag'd and was impassable.
—Thus check'd, the Wanderers gaz'd around, and seeing
Promise of future plenty, (noble Woods,
And chrystal Rills, and many a pastoral Scene,
Recalling to their Souls sweet thoughts of Home)
There fix'd their habitation—*there* built up
The Town of *Schwytz*, and clearing far away
Dank fen, deep rock, and root-entangled brake,
Call'd forth yon Garden in the Wilderness
[Pointing towards Schwytz]
Meantime the People grew in numbers, 'till
The land suffic'd no longer to sustain them:
So part once more mov'd Southward—passing now
The Lake, to the Black-Mountains, into Weissland,
Where—behind everlasting Snows entrench'd—
Another People spoke another tongue.
—Thus rose the Town of *Stanz*, beside the Kernwald;
Thus *Altdorf*, in the Valley of the Reuss.

Yet still, howe'er by Lake or Mountain parted,
We all remain'd in heart and blood, the same,
Distinct in both from all surrounding People.
[Extending his hands to the right and the left.]

AUF DER MAUER.

Yes! We are all, *all* of one heart and lineage.

CONFEDERATES [all extending their hands].

All, all are one!

STAUFFACHER.

The Nations round us groan
In foreign bondage; some, by craft enthrall'd
Or chance of battle; others, the foul scorn
From farthest Sires inheriting; and all
Doom'd, perhaps, to transmit it to their Children.
But *We*—the genuine Race of the old *Switzer*—
We still have, through all times, preserv'd our Freedom;
We never bowed our knee to Lords and Princes—
—Freely we sought protection of the Empire—

RÖSSELMANN.

The Boon was freely sought, was freely given;—
So stands it in the Emperor Frederick's Charter—

STAUFFACHER.

For e'en the Freest must have some Superior,
Some Judge to arbitrate 'twixt Man and Man,
And guard the Weaker from assault and danger.
What wonder then that our Forefathers, anxious
To keep in quiet what in toil they 'd won,
Allowed that honour to the Emperor;
Acknowledging, as Chief, him whom the whole
Germanic Realm had chosen for its Master,
And, like the other Freemen of the Empire,
In grateful recompense for peace at home,

Assisting him against his foreign Foes —
The only service which Freemen could offer —

MELCHTHAL.

All other Service had been Slavery.

STAUFFACHER.

But though we fought beneath the Cæsar's banner,
Spreading his glories and our own afar,
We never yielded to his sway at home.
Here we dwelt free! —
Chose our own Chiefs, enacted our own Laws,
And liv'd according to old forms and fashions.
One Judge alone, and him at our own instance,
The empire nam'd — some high and honour'd Noble —
Who had nor seat nor interest in the Cantons,
But coming, as the rare Occasion call'd,
In case of life and death, sought out the truth,
And, under the bright Heavens, and without fear
Of Man, adjudg'd the cause and gave us equal Justice.
— Such was our State — Was *that* a State of Slavery?

IM-HOFE.

No — We were always free — Who dares gainsay it?
Despotic Power was never known amongst us.

STAUFFACHER.

Even from the Cæsar we witheld obedience,
When he would have employ'd it for our wrong,
Confirming to the Cloister of Einsiedeln,
Under vague plea of Grant from his Precessors,
Those Alps, which were, by right of ages, ours.
— For when the Abbot, thus upholden, press'd
His claim, we told him, that, "the Grant was void,

And had been surreptitiously obtain'd,
(The Grantor ignorant of the boon he gave)—
That none, no, not the Cæsar could bestow
The Lands which were another's; and if the' Empire
Denied to right us, we could right ourselves.—"
—Thus spake our Fathers:—And shall we endure
A degradation which they 'd died to think of?
Bear from a foreign Slave what never Cæsar
In all his plenitude of power attempted?
This Soil we have created for ourselves;
By our own industry we form'd it all,
Changing the habitation of wild Bears
Into bright fields and social haunts of Men;
The Dragon's fiery Brood we have extinguish'd;
The misty chaos, the death-pall, that spread
O'er Nature's fairest works, we 've rent asunder;
We 've drain'd the Fen, burst through the solid Rock,
O'erarch'd the dark Abyss and foaming Torrent,
And op'd new Realms of wonder to Mankind!
—A thousand years have seen the Soil our own;
And shall a foreign Slave now wrest it from us?
Is there no help on Earth 'gainst such Oppression?

[Great sensation amongst the Country-People.]

Yes—wildest Tyranny hath yet its limits!
When the Opprest finds nowhere earthly succour,
When the Load grows past sufferance—He appeals
To Heaven—calls down his everlasting Rights,
Suspended there—inalienate—inalienable—
Which God hath fram'd, and Man cannot destroy
Old Nature's Reign returns, old Nature's Laws,
—(For Selfdefence is Nature's oldest Law)—
And the good Sword becomes sole Arbitrator.
—On this foundation then we rest our cause—
The common cause—We stand here for our Country,
We stand here for our Homes, our Wives, our Children!

ALL [clashing their Swords].

We stand here for our Homes, our Wives, our Children!

RÖSSELMANN.

Yet pause one moment!—Ere the Sword be drawn,
Weigh well War's dubious chance, War's certain evils;
Think if each righteous object of our wishes
May not by means far surer be attain'd;
Whether by separating from the Empire,
And owning the supremacy of Austria—

AUF DER MAUER.

What says the Priest?—Allegiance to proud Austria!

AM-BÜHEL.

Hearken not to him!

WINKELRIED.

'T is a Traitor's counsel,
An Enemy's suggestion!

REDING.

Peace! Confederates.

SEWA.

Swear faith to Austria—faith to our Oppressor!—

VON DER FLÜE.

Yield to her menaces what we denied
To her persuasions!

MEIER.

We should then be Slaves—
Ay, Slaves indeed! And worthy well to be so.

AUF DER MAUER.

Be degradation from the name of Switzer,
Proscription from the rights and rank of Freeman,
—Be this *his* doom, who to usurping Austria
Dares counsel base submission!—Landamman,
I move that this be our first Law—

MELCHTHAL.

The first,
The fundamental Law of our Confederacy!
Surrender to proud Austria! Who dares name it?
Eternal degradation be his doom!
Number him not among your Citizens,
Exclude him from all honours of the State,
Exile him from your very Hearths and Altars—

REDING [to the Confederates].

You hear the Question! what is your Resolve?

CONFEDERATES [holding up their right hands].

We will that it be Law!

REDING [after a pause].

It is Law!

JOCELYN VON WEILER.

Now,
Now to the order of the Day—Proceed—

REDING.

Confederates! Have all gentler Means been tried?
'T is possible the King may be a Stranger
To our afflictions. Ere the Sword be drawn,
Be sure that our Complaints have reach'd his ear,

And that no other Remedy remains.
Force is, at best, a fearful thing. God helps
Not arms, where there are Laws to right us.

STAUFFACHER [to Conrad Hunn].

Conrad!
Step forth; now is the time for your report.

CONRAD HUNN.

I was at Rhinefield, in the Cæsar's Palace,
Deputed by the Cantons to complain
Against the harsh oppressions of their Governors
And bring back the old Charters of our Freedom,
Which each new King was wont to ratify.
There we found many Deputies assembled
From Suabia and the Channels of the Rhine,
Who all receiv'd their Parchments, and return'd
Exulting home. Your Deputies alone
Were sent back without hearing or redress—
"The Cæsar has not time"—(thus spake the Council)
"The Cæsar has not time for your concerns;
"Some other day perhaps he 'll think of you."—
And, as all mournful we pass'd down the Hall,
We saw the Grand-Duke John, and, sitting with him,
The noble Lords of Wart and Tägerfeld,
Who, calling to us, said—"Swiss, right yourselves!
"Expect not Justice from the Emperor.
"Has he not beggar'd his own Kindred—robb'd
"A Brother's Son of his just Heritage?—
"—Nay, when the Prince implor'd him for his Right,
"Alledging his full age and competence
"To rule his own—What was the Monarchs answer?
"Why—snatching up a little wreath of Flowers,
"As 'though 't were to add insult to oppression,
"He dropp'd it on his Nephew's brows, exclaiming—
"This is the only Crown for Boys like you!"—

AUF DER MAUER.

We 've heard enough. Of Justice from the Emperor
Let no man dream! We must e'en right ourselves.

REDING.

We have no choice; no other course remains.

WALTER FÜRST.

We would remove all hateful violence;
We would maintain the Rights our Fathers left us;
Not crying Liberty and meaning License,
But rendering unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's;—
True to ourselves, but not unjust to others.

MEIER.

I hold Estates in fief from Austria.

WALTER FÜRST.

Then render homage for your fief to Austria.

VON WEILER.

I rent Estates of Rapperschwyl—

WALTER FÜRST.

Continue
To pay rent for them to the Lord of Rapperschwyl.

RÖSSELMANN.

I hold of Zurich's Abbess.

WALTER FÜRST.

Pay to her,
Give to the Cloister what 's the Cloister's due.—
—What, needs, must be, we 'll do, but nothing further.
We 'll chase away these foreign Governors,

And break down their Strong-holds of Tyranny,
But — if it can be — without blood or vengeance.
So shall the Emperor himself acknowledge
Necessity, not License, urg'd us on;
And — when he sees us peaceable, content
With our recover'd Rights and Territories,
And unmolesting others — haply He
May deem it prudent to remit his anger:
For sure that Nation must inspire respect,
Which, having power of vengeance, scorns to use it.

STAUFFACHER.

Who draws his Sword for Empire or for Glory,
Deserves a Robber's, not a Hero's, name:
The Cause alone can vindicate the deed.
Our Freedom, Country, Kindred, Friends, assail'd
By unjust Force and struggling with Oppression —
These, these are objects, worthy of our care,
And sanctify the triumphs of our Arms.

REDING.

But how are these, our projects, to be executed?
The Enemy has arms, and will not yield
Possession of the Land without a blow.

STAUFFACHER.

He will, when once he sees us all in arms,
— We must surprize him ere he is prepar'd.

MEIER.

That 's sooner said than done. — There 're two strong Castles,
Which overhang the Land, and where our Foes
Would find protection, 'till the Emperor
Came with fresh armies to recruit their power.
Rotzberg and Sarnen must, by force or stratagem,
Be made our own, before the Cantons rise.

STAUFFACHER.

If we delay, the Governor will have notice;
Such numbers are already in the secret.

MEIER.

There dwells no Traitor in the Forest Cantons!

RÖSSELMANN.

But Zeal, like Treachery, will sometimes betray.

WALTER FÜRST.

Should we delay, the Landvogt will have built
His third Strong-Hold, and fenc'd himself in Uri.

MEIER.

You 're thinking of yourselves —

SACRIST.

You 're most unjust.

MEIER.

Unjust — Unjust! — Does Uri dare to say so?

REDING.

Peace! On your oath —

MEIER.

Yes, if Schwytz hold with Uri,
We must indeed be silent.

REDING.

I appeal
To this Assembly 'gainst such interruption. —
Stand we not here *all* in one common cause?

CONFEDERATES.

All in one common Cause—*All* Friends and Brothers.

WINKELRIED.

Wait 'till the new year, and one Fort, at least,
—The Fort of Sarnen—may, with ease, be won.
We 've but to station fifty chosen Men
Within th' adjacent Wood, from whence some ten
Or twelve, going forth in Vassal's guise and feigning
To come with New-Year's presents to the Governor,
May find an easy way into the Castle.
Iron-spikes beneath their Vestments close-conceal'd
(For none with open arms dare venture thither)
They can, when needed, fix upon their Staves.
—This done—With sudden rush they may disarm
The Guard, possess the Gate, and summon, with
Swift blast of Horn, their Comrades to assistance.
—Thus, without labour, Sarnen might be ours.

MELCHTHAL.

For Rotzberg—I will undertake its capture
On any night the Meeting shall resolve.
I have a Friend within its walls, who will,
By means of a Rope-ladder, give me entrance.
—Once there myself, I soon will bring in others.

REDING [to the Confederates].

Is it your will to wait the time propos'd?
[The Majority hold up their hands.]
'T is carried. There are twenty against twelve.

WALTER FÜRST.

Should the Forts fall at the appointed hour,
We must give instant Signal from the Hills,

And summon forth the Land-force to our aid.
—When once these Foes have witness'd our resolves,
They will not long molest us with their presence;
Too happy to escape, beneath our escort,
In life and safety, from these hostile shores.

STAUFFACHER.

All except Gessler: Him alone I dread.
He will not quit the Field, without a struggle.
Nay, though expell'd, his powers will not be wanting
To forge new plots and fetters for the Land.
—'T is hard, 't is almost perilous, to spare him.

BAUMGARTEN.

Wherever there 's neck-hazard, station me.
To Tell am I indebted for my life,
And gladly I devote it to my Country.

REDING.

Time brings its counsels. Something must be left
To further thought and instant opportunity.—
But look, whilst here in night we are debating,
Morn's glowing Watch hath climb'd the Eastern Mountains!
—Come, let 's away, ere the full Day surprize us.

WALTER FÜRST.

Slow wanes the Night from these sequester'd Vallies.

[All involuntarily uncover their heads and contemplate the red Dawn in silence.]

RÖSSELMANN.

By yon bright Orb, that fires the opening Skies,
And greets us, first of Switzers, with his rays,
Let 's swear the Oath of our Confederation.—

—We swear to be one People of true Brothers—
We swear that no Extremity shall part us.

[All repeating the Words after them, and each Man holding up three fingers of his Right-hand—]

We will be free, free as our Fathers left us,
Preferring Death in any shape, to Slavery.

[As before.]

We 'll put our strong trust in the Highest God,
Nor fear what might of Man can do against us.

[Repeating as before, and then embracing each other.]

STAUFFACHER.

Now to our several Homes and Occupations!
—Hunter and Fisher, to your woods and lakes;
Peasants and Herdsmen, to your fields and cattle;
And all—to recruit Friends for the Confederacy!
—In tranquil thought await the Day of Action;
What needs, must be endur'd, 'till then, endure it;
Let the Account run on increasing, 'till
Our Day of Reckoning with the Tyrant come—
The appointed Day—which is to settle all.
Meantime, howe'er provok'd, restrain your vengeance,
Postponing private griefs to public justice.
For he, who rights himself in his own quarrel,
Commits a robbery on the common Good.

[They all go out by three different ways, in the greatest order and silence—The empty Scene remains open for some time, exhibiting the grand spectacle of the Sun rising over the Ice-Mountains.—The Curtain falls amidst a full burst of the whole Orchestra.—]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Court before Tell's House — Tell with a Carpenter's Axe — Hedwige, his Wife, engaged in her domestic duties — Walter and William, their Children, playing with a little Cross-Bow.—

WALTER [sings].

O'er Mountain and Valley—
Abroad with the Day—
We bold Hunters sally
In quest of our prey.

Wave, Eagle, thy pinion,
Supreme in the Air!
But what Earth-King's dominion
With ours can compare?

Far as Cross-Bow can carry,
As Arrow can fly
Wild and Tame are our Quarry
Of Lake, Land, and Sky.
[Runs bounding to his Father.]

The String is broken; Mend it for me, Father.

TELL.

Not I.—A true-born Archer helps himself. [The Boys retire.]

HEDWIGE.

The Boys begin betimes.

TELL.

Whatever art,
We would excell in, must be practis'd early.

HEDWIGE.

Ah! Would to God, they never, never learn'd it.

TELL.

Boys must learn every thing. Whoe'er would win
His way through life—Whoe'er would stand secure
From arms of others—needs should know the use
Of arms himself.

HEDWIGE.

Alas! once skill'd in shooting,
The Boys will never rest in peace at home.

TELL.

But rove the Hills as I do!—Well, I own,
That Nature never form'd me for a Herdsman—
I can't sit still; I must be following something.
—To me there 's no enjoyment like the Chase.

HEDWIGE.

And think'st thou nothing of thy Wife—of Her,
Who waits at home, in anguish, thy return?—
I shudder, when they tell me of thy risques.
Thou never leav'st me but my Heart grows cold
And shrinks, as though each Farewell were the last—
I see thee, midst the frozen Wilderness,
Missing, perchance, thy leap o'er some dark Gulph
Or whirl'd down headlong with the struggling Chamois;
I see the Avalanche close o'er thy head—

The treacherous Ice give way beneath thy feet, —
And thee — the Victim of a living Grave!
Death, in a thousand varying shapes, way-lays
The Alpine Hunter. — 'T is a neckhazardous
And fearful trade, and leads but to destruction.

TELL.

He, who will tranquilly look round him, trusting
To God, and to those powers, which God hath given him,
May guard himself from almost every danger.
These Mountains have no terrors for their Children.
[Having finished his work, he puts by the Axe.]
Well now, this Door may serve another twelvemonth,
An Axe at hand oft saves the Carpenter. [Takes up his Hat.]

HEDWIGE.

Where are you going?

TELL.

To Altdorf — to your Father's.

HEDWIGE.

Now are n't you bent on something hazardous?
Confess it to me.

TELL.

What should make you to think so?

HEDWIGE.

There is some plot against the Governor —
'T was plann'd last night at Rütli — Yes, I know it,
And thou art one of the Confederacy.

TELL.

I was not at the Rütli, yet, if call'd for,
This Arm shall not be wanting in the Cause.

HEDWIGE.

Where there is danger, they 'll be sure to call thee;
The hardest Post, as usual, will be thine.

TELL.

Each must be task'd according to his powers.

HEDWIGE.

In the late Storm, who, but thyself, had ventur'd
Across the Lake with the Alzellen Man?
It is a mercy that you both escap'd!—
— Thou should'st know better what thy Life is worth
Should'st think sometimes of thy poor Wife and Children.

TELL.

Dear Wife, it was because I thought of *mine*—
That I restor'd a House-Father to *his*—
It was because I thought of you, I did it.

HEDWIGE.

To embark in such a Storm! It might be call'd
Tempting, not trusting in, God's providence.

TELL.

Who thinks too much, will but accomplish little.

HEDWIGE.

Yes, thou art good and kind, and helpest all!
But, in like danger, who'd do thee like service?

TELL.

God grant, I ne'er may stand in need of it.
[Takes up his Cross-Bow.]

HEDWIGE.

What would'st thou with thy Bow? Tell, leave it here.

TELL.

I would, as lief, be without hands, as Cross-bow.
[The Boys return.]

WALTER.

Where are you going: Father?

TELL.

To thy Grand-Sire's—
To Altdorf—Wilt thou with me?

WALTER.

Oh! yes, Father.

HEDWIGE.

The Governor is there: Go not to Altdorf.

TELL.

He leaves the place to-day.

HEDWIGE.

Then let him leave it,
Before thou go'st there; He bears grudge against thee.

TELL.

His Malice is not like to injure me—
I do what 's right, and am afraid of no Man.

HEDWIGE.

Those, that do right, he always hates the most.

TELL.

That 's because he wants pretext to oppress them.
—The Knight, however, will leave me in peace. . . . .

HEDWIGE.

Art thou so sure of that?

TELL.

'T is not long since,
—As forth I far'd to hunt the Schächenthal,
Following the Precipices' narrow path,
With steep acclivity of Rock above
And the hoarse Torrent's foaming breath below,
(Digress on either side alike, debarr'd)

[Here the Boys press round their Father and look at him with eager curiosity.]

I met the Governor.—There stood we alone—
Man fronting Man, and the Abyss beside us.
No sooner did he see than recognize me—
(Me, whom the week before he had amere'd
So grievously and for no fault whatever)—
No sooner did he see me on his path
Advancing, than a sudden tremor seiz'd him;
His colour rose and fell, his Knees denied
Their office, and I thought he would have fallen
Down headlong in the roaring Gulph below!
—So, pitying, I drew near to his relief,
And with respectful salutation grate him,
Saying—"'T is I, Lord Governor, 't is Tell—"
But Fear had chok'd all utterance, and he only
Could motion with his hand for me to leave him—
—So on I pass'd and sent his Servants to him.

HEDWIGE.

Woe to thee! Thou 'hast been Witness of his weakness;
The Governor hath trembled in thy presence;
He never will forgive thee.

TELL.

I shall, therefore,
Avoid him, and he will not look for me.—

HEDWIGE.

Remain at home to-day—Or, if thou canst not,
Go hunt—Go any where—Except to Altdorf.

TELL.

What is 't hath thus come o'er thee?

HEDWIGE.

Stay at home!
The thoughts of Altdorf fill me with distraction.

TELL.

Why thus torment thyself without a cause?

HEDWIGE.

That very want of explainable cause
But makes my terror greater. Stay at home.

TELL.

Dear Wife, I 've given my promise to your Father.

HEDWIGE.

Then go; but leave at least the Boy at home.

WALTER.

No, Mother dear! I must go with my Father.

HEDWIGE.

What, Walter, would'st thou leave thy Mother?

WALTER.

Mother,
I 'll bring you something nice from Grandpapa's.
[Exit with his Father.]

WILLIAM.

Dear Mother, I 'll stay with you.

HEDWIGE [embracing him].

Ay, thou art
My darling Child! I knew *thou* would'st not leave me.

[She goes to the Court-Gate and follows her Husband and Son, for sometime, with her eyes.]

SCENE II.

A wild Region enclosed with Cliffs and Forests — Cascades rushing from the Rocks.

BERTHA in a Hunting Dress — RUDENZ following her.

BERTHA.

He follows me — At length I may explain myself.

RUDENZ.

Lady, at length I find you all-alone.
Steep Precipice and solitary Forest
Surround us. Here may I, unseen of any,
Disburden the long silence of my Soul.

BERTHA.

Hark! The Hunt follows us —

RUDENZ.

No — 't was but some
Stray Echo — The Hunt's of yonder.—Now or never?
I must not lose the precious opportunity:
My Fate — whate'er its die — shall be decided —
— Whether to separate from thee for ever —

—O Bertha, look not thus unkindly on me.
I know my little worth; unmark'd by Fame
I dare not rank myself with the proud Knights
Around thee; I have nothing but my Heart,
My Heart, that 's full of truth and love, to offer thee.

BERTHA [in a tone of severity].

And dar'st *thou* talk to me of truth and love—
Thou—who art faithless to thy nearest duties?
[Rudenz starts back]
The Slave of Austria—

RUDENZ.

This reproach from Bertha!
Whom on that side did I seek out but her?

BERTHA.

Thought you to find me on the side of treason?
—No—Sooner would I yield this hand to Gessler,
To Gessler's self, to Gessler the Oppressor,
Than to the unnatural Son of Switzerland,
Who could descend to be his Instrument.

RUDENZ.

O God! What do I hear?

BERTHA.

How! What lies nearer
To every good Man than his Country's weal?
What sweeter duty for the noble Heart
Than to stand guardian over Innocence
And vindicate the rights of the Oppress'd?
—My very Soul bleeds in me for your People;
They are so generous-minded, modest, brave;
They draw my whole Heart to them—every day
I learn to love and to respect them more.

— But You — whom Nature and your knightly Duty
Gave to be their Protector — You, who 've left them —
Who, faithless, have gone over to the Foe,
Forging base fetters for your Fatherland —
'Tis you, that vex and wound me; I must put
Constraint upon my feelings not to hate you.

RUDENZ.

And do I not consult my Country's weal?
What am I seeking from the power of Austria
But peace for Switzerland?

BERTHA.

Not peace, but bondage!
Thou 'rt chasing Freedom from the last Strong-hold,
Which Fraud and Force have left her — But the People
Know their own interests better — they behold
These things with juster, purer Eyes, than thou dost:
No sophistry has dazzled their sound sense.
— O, into what a net thou 'st run thyself!

RUDENZ.

Bertha! I see, you hate me, you despise me!

BERTHA.

'T were better for me that I did — but oh!
To see him — *him*, one had so gladly lov'd —
Thus fallen, thus degraded —

RUDENZ.

Bertha! Bertha!
Heaven's highest bliss thou sett'st before mine Eyes,
Then hurl'st me from all hope of it for ever.

BERTHA.

No, no; the Noble is not all-extinct
Within thee! It but slumbers; I 'll awake it.
Long hast thou warr'd against thy better Self,
Long labour'd to subdue thy native Virtue;
But well for thee! She is mightier far than thou art,
And, spite of thine own self, thou 'rt good and noble.

RUDENZ.

O couldst thou trust me! What would not thy Love,
What would not thine inspiring Virtue, make me!
Then tell me, teach me, what I ought to be.

BERTHA.

Be what kind Nature made thee! Fill the place
She hath assign'd thee; Stand up for thy Country,
And vindicate its People from Oppression.

RUDENZ.

But then, woe's me!—If I oppose the Emperor,
What hope remains of having Bertha mine?—
Mightier than Friends or Kin, claims not the Cæsar
Sole guidance and disposal of thy Hand?

BERTHA.

My Lands lie in the Forest States; and if
The Switzer be deliver'd, so am I.

RUDENZ.

O Bertha, what a light you 've open'd on me!

BERTHA.

Hope not through Austria's favour to obtain me;
She but thrusts forth her hand for my possessions,
Impatient to unite them with her own.

The same fierce thirst for Territory, which
Would swallow up your Freedom, threatens mine.
Alas! dear Friend, what am I but a Victim —
A destin'd Recompense for some Crown-Favourite?
There — where proud Selfishness and Falsehood reign —
E'en to the Cæsar's Court they 'll drag me — there
Detested Marriage-Chains are waiting me, —
Chains, from which Love alone — thy Love — can save me.

RUDENZ.

Canst thou consent to live here — to be mine
In my own Fatherland? — O Bertha, Bertha,
What were mine aspirations after Greatness,
My longings for a courtlier, wider sphere,
— What were they, but the yearnings of my Love?
One Star alone beam'd in my path of Glory,
And all my dreams of Fame were thoughts of Thee.
Thou canst confine thyself to these lone Vallies —
Thou canst for me renounce Earth's dazzling Grandeurs!
— Then is the Goal of mine Ambition won,
Then may the Stream of yon wild World beat round me,
I have no wish to tempt its billows more —
Imparadis'd within my native Mountains.

BERTHA.

Now thou art all, that this presaging Heart
Believ'd; my fondest Faith has not betray'd me.

RUDENZ.

Away, ye baseless Visions, that misled me,
And welcome, Peace and Happiness, at home.
Here, where the glad Boy blossom'd into Man;
Here, where a thousand tender Recollections,
A thousand traces of past Joy, surround me;
Where Tree, Flower, Fountain, all seem living for me;

—In this dear Fatherland wilt Thou be mine!—
Ah, dearly have I always lov'd my Country!
Power, Pleasure, Glory, what were they without it?

BERTHA.

Where should we look for happiness on Earth,
If not in this dear Land of Innocence?
Here—where old Faith has rear'd her rock-girt throne,
Where Fraud and Baseness never found a home—
Here shall no Envy taint our Springs of Joy,
But, pure as Light, our Life's smooth Stream glide on.
—Here do I see THEE—Lord of all my wishes—
See thee, in all thy genuine worth of Manhood,
Exalted high as Virtue can desire,
The first of Freemen, and the first of Nobles,
Blessing and bless'd of all, and owning homage
Greater than Sword e'er won, or Sceptre sway'd.

RUDENZ.

Here do I see THEE, Crown of Wives and Women,
Intent on each domestic, kindly duty,
Build up a Heaven for me in my own Home,
Cheer, elevate, and bless, all Hearts around thee,
And, like young Spring with her sweet Songs and Flowers,
Lend to Life's path a charm unfelt before.

BERTHA.

Learn now, dear Friend, the cause of all my grief;
Think what I felt at seeing thee make shipwreck
Of this, Life's purest, Happiness.—Woe's me!
Had I been doom'd to follow some proud Knight
—The Land's Oppressor—into his dark Castle!—
Here shall no frowning Turrets, no steep Walls,
Divide us from the People of our love.

RUDENZ.

But how to free myself — to break the bonds,
Which — Madman that I was — I 've spun around me?

BERTHA.

Rend them with manly resolution! — And
— Whatever the event — stand by thy People!
It is thy born, thy bounden place — [The Hunter's Horn is heard]
But hark!
The Chase draws nearer — We must part — Away —
Fight for thy Fatherland! Thou fightest for
Thy Love! — There is one Foe we all must dread;
There is one Freedom, which would bless us all. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

A Meadow near Altdorf — Trees in the foreground — Farther back the Hat on a pole — The prospect bounded by the Bannberg — Above it Mountains of Snow.

FRIESSHARDT and LEUTHOLD mounting guard over the Hat.

FRIESSHARDT.

We watch in vain. There 's not a Soul comes near us.
This Green, which us'd to swarm like any Fair, —
So throng'd, so bustling, — has become a Desert.
The Hat 's a perfect Scarecrow to the People.
They will not look at, much less reverence, it.

LEUTHOLD.

Only the basest Rabble ever show here;
And they but come to sneer and jest, and wave
Their ragged Caps in scorn. Respectable

And honest Folks all keep aloof, preferring
Rather to go round half the Town, than join
In such sad mummery.

FRIESSHARDT.

The People had
To pass the place at Noon from the Town-Hall,
And I had hop'd to make my harvest of them,
(For some would needs forget the ceremony)
But—as ill-luck would have it—Rösselmann,
The Priest, was coming, at that very moment,
From some sick Chamber near; on seeing whom
The Sacrist rang his bell, and all fell down,
All knees were bent, and mine among the rest—
But not, in salutation, to the Hat—
No, no—'t was to the Host!—

LEUTHOLD.

Comrade, methinks
We cut a miserable figure here;
We 're like two Rascals in a Pillory.
It is disgraceful for us Soldiers to
Stand sentinels before an empty Hat.
Sure every honest Fellow must despise us.
—Pay reverence to an empty Hat!—The thing 's
Absurd!

FRIESSHARDT.

And why not to an empty Hat,
As to an empty Head? Full oft thou 'st bowed
Thee to the latter.

LEUTHOLD.

Thou 'rt an officious Knave,
And gladly wouldst bring honest Folks to trouble.
Pass by the Hat who may—I shall not see them.

HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, and ELSBETH enter with their Children, and station themselves round the Pole.

MECHTHILD.

There hangs the Governor! Boys, shew reverence to him.

ELSBETH.

Would, he had gone and left us but his Hat!

HILDEGARD.

Or that his Head were hung up in its place!

MECHTHILD.

The Land would not be worse off, either way.

FRIESSHARDT [driving them off].

Away! Begone!—A cursed Pack of Women!
Who thinks of you? Send here your Husbands;—see
If they have courage to defy our orders.

Enter TELL and his Son, WALTER, leading by his hand. [They both pass on to the front of the Stage without regarding the Hat.]

WALTER [pointing to the Bannberg].

Is it true that the Trees, on yonder Mountain,
Bleed, when the Woodman cuts them?

Tell ~~WALTER~~.

Who says so, Boy?

WALTER.

The Master Herdsman told me so.—The Trees
Are all bewitch'd, and—whoe'er injures them—
His Hand, he says, will grow out from the grave.

TELL.

There is a Charm about them, that is certain.—
—Seest thou yon Mountains with their snowy peaks
Melting into, and mingling with, the Sky?

WALTER.

Those are the Glaciers, that send down the Avalanches,
And thunder so at nights.

TELL.

Ay, and those Avalanches
Had buried Altdorf, ages since, but for
The intervening barrier of the Forest.

WALTER.

Are there Lands without Mountains, Father?

TELL.

Yes!—
Descending from these heights, and following still
The River's onward course, we reach at length
A level Country, where the Torrent's roar,
Leaping from rock to rock, and wild to leave
Its Mountain prison, is no longer heard;
But Rivers, broad and deep, through smiling plains
Roll on, in tranquil grandeur, to the Ocean.
There the whole face of Heaven is open to us;
There teems the Soil with more abundant grain,
And all is as a Garden to behold.

WALTER.

Why don't we quickly seek out that fair Land,
Instead of vexing and o'ertoiling here?

TELL.

The Land is bright and lovely, as its Skies,
But those, who cultivate, cannot enjoy, it.

WALTER.

Live they not free on their own heritage,
As thou dost, Father?

TELL.

No — The Country round
Belongs all to the Bishop and the King.

WALTER.

Dare they not hunt, as we do, in the Forests?

TELL.

Wild Animals, whether of foot or wing
All are the Lords!

WALTER.

And can't they fish the Stream?

TELL.

The Stream, the Wood, the Plain, are all the Sovereign's

WALTER.

Who is this King, of whom they 're so afraid!

TELL.

He is the one, who fosters and protects them.

WALTER.

Can they not foster and protect themselves?

TELL.

There Neighbour dares not trust e'en Neighbour —

WALTER.

Father!

ıld want breathing-room in such a Land.
et me rather dwell beneath the Avalanches.

TELL.

'rt right, my Boy; No Icebergs at thy back
ıalf so dangerous as evil Men. [They are passing on.]

WALTER.

Father, see the Hat on yonder Pole!

TELL.

is the Hat to us?—Come, Boy, let 's on.
ıt he is moving off Friesshardt goes up to, and stops, him with his Pike.]

FRIESSHARDT.

In the Cæsar's Name, halt! I command you.

TELL [laying hold of the Pike].

would you, Soldier? Why do you detain us?

FRIESSHARDT.

ve disobeyed the mandate of the Emperor.

LEUTHOLD.

ve not done reverence to the Landgrave's Hat.

TELL.

d, let me go!

FRIESSHARDT.

Away with him to Prison.

WALTER.

r to Prison! Help, help!—Here, kind People!
for my Father!—They 're forcing him to Prison.

Enter RÖSSELMANN, the Priest,—PETERMANN, the Sacris and others.

SACRIST.

What Cry was that?

RÖSSELMANN.

Why layest thou thy hands
On this good Man?

FRIESSHARDT.

He is a Traitor!

TELL.

I—
I, a Traitor!

RÖSSELMANN.

Thou art mistaken, Friend!
'T is Tell, an upright Man and loyal Citizen.

Enter WALTER FÜRST.

WALTER TELL [running to his Grandfather].

Grandfather, help! They 're murdering my Father!

FRIESSHARDT.

Away with him to Prison!

WALTER FÜRST.

Stay! I 'll bail him.—
—For God's sake, Tell, what's this has happened to thee

Enter MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER.

FRIESSHARDT.

He has contemn'd the Governor's authority—
He has denied allegiance to the Cæsar!

MELCHTHAL.

Villain, thou liest!

STAUFFACHER.

What is Tell's offence?

LEUTHOLD.

He has not shewn due reverence to the Hat!

WALTER FÜRST.

And so, for this thou 'rt forcing him to Prison!
—Friend, take my bail, and let him go.

FRIESSHARDT.

Keep thou
Thy bail for thine own body! We but do
Our duty—Quick, away with him to Prison.

MELCHTHAL [to the People].

It is a crying wrong! Shall we endure it?—
What, shall they drag him off before our Eyes!

SACRIST.

We are the strongest.—Friends, allow it not!—
There 're thousands, thousands, in the Land, to back us.

FRIESSHARDT.

Who dares resist the Governor's authority?

COUNTRY-PEOPLE [Men and Women, rushing in].

We 'll help thee, Tell! We 'll down with these Oppressors!

TELL.

I can protect myself.—Kind Friends, forbear!
—I pray you hear me—Home in peace, good People!

Think ye—if I were willing to put forth
My strength—that I should tremble at their Lances?

MELCHTHAL [to Friesshardt].

Dare it—dare thus to drag him off before us!

WALTER FÜRST and STAUFFACHER.

Peace, peace! Be calm!

FRIESSHARDT.

Revolt! Rebellion! Treason!
[The Hunter's Horn is heard.]

WOMEN.

Here comes the Governor!

FRIESSHARDT [raising his voice.].

Rebellion! Murder!

STAUFFACHER.

Scream 'till thou burstest, Villain!

WALTER FÜRST and MELCHTHAL.

Wilt thou peace?

FRIESSHARDT [still louder].

Help! Help! Help for the Ministers of Law!

WALTER FÜRST.

Here is the Governor! What will become of us?

Enter GESSLER on horseback, with a Falcon on his wrist — RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, BERTHA and RUDENZ, and a long Train of armed Servants, who form a circle with their Pikes around the whole Stage.—

RUDOLPH.

Place for the Governor!

GESSLER.

Disperse the Crowd!
Why are the People thus assembled here? [A general silence.]
And who call'd help?—Who was it?—I will know.
[Friesshardt comes forward.]
Who' art thou?—And why dost thou detain that Man?
[Gives the Falcon to a Servant].

FRIESSHARDT.

Mighty Lord governor, I am thy Servant
And one of those appointed to keep watch
Before the Hat. This Man, my Lord, I caught
In the very *ipso facto* of refusing
Obedience to your Lordship's high commands;
He pass'd by without bowing to the Hat.
So I arrested him as I was order'd;
But the base Rabble fain would force him from me.

GESSLER [after a pause].

Tell!—Dost thou so contemn thine Emperor,
And me, thine Emperor's Representative,
As to refuse all reverence to the Hat,
Which I set up in test of your obedience?
—Thine evil Disposition is too manifest.

TELL.

Pardon, dread Lord! It was through inadvertence,
And not contempt of your authority,
That this has happen'd. Were I cautious and
Discreet, my Name would not be Tell; I ask
For grace; the Error shall not happen more.

GESSLER [after a dead silence].

They say, thou art a Master of the Cross-Bow—
Thine Arrow never misses—

WALTER.

That is true, Sir!
My Father, at an hundred paces' distance,
Can cleave an Apple from the Tree.

GESSLER.

Is that
Thy Boy, Tell?

TELL.

Yes, Sir.

GESSLER.

Hast thou any more?

TELL.

One Boy at home.

GESSLER.

And which is dearest to thee?

TELL.

They 're both mine own, mine equally, dear Children.

GESSLER.

Now, since thou 'rt such a Master of the Cross-bow
And, at an hundred paces, can'st bring down
An Apple from the Tree, thou shalt display
Thy talent before me: Come, take thy bow
—I see, it is already in thy hand—
And shoot an Apple from thy Youngling's head.
But heed thee well; for if, at the first shot,
Thou hitt'st it not, thy Head shall be the forfeit.
[All give signs of horror.]

TELL.

O, what a monstrous thing dost thou require!
Of me—*I*—aim an Arrow at the head
Of my dear Child!—No, Sir, thou canst not mean it.
—Such thing was ne'er exacted of a Father!

GESSLER.

The Apple thou shalt shoot from thy Son's head—
It shall be so—I will it—I command it.

TELL.

Aim at the cherish'd head of mine own Child—
I 'd sooner perish—

GESSLER.

Thou shalt shoot or perish—
Ay, instantly—and thy Son perish with thee.—

TELL.

Shall I become the Murderer of my Boy?—
You have no Children, Sir; you never knew
The tender throbbings of a Father's heart.

GESSLER.

Hah! thou 'rt become, all of a sudden, wise—
They told me, that, thou wert a Dreamer—one,
That lov'd the marvellous—one quite unlike
All other Folks—Well, here is an exploit
Reserv'd for thee, and worthy of thine arm.

BERTHA.

O, do no jest, my Lord, with these poor People!
You see how pale and trembling, all around,
They stand. So little are they us'd to jests from you.

GESSLER.

Who says that I am jesting? [seizes the branch of a Tree that is above him] Here is an Apple—
Make room there—Let him take his distance, as
Is customary,—Eighty yards I give him—
Nor less nor more—He boasts that he is able,
Even at an hundred yards, to hit his Man—
Now, Shotsman, aim and do not miss thy mark!

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS.

Heavens! It grows serious—Down upon thy knees, Boy,
And pray the Governor to spare thy life.

WALTER FÜRST [aside to Melchthal].

Restrain thyself! Be silent, I beseech thee!

BERTHA [to the Governor].

Let this suffice you, Sir. It is unmanly
To sport thus with a Father's agony.
If the poor Man—for this, his slight, offence—
Had forfeited both limb and life—By Heavens!
He has already suffer'd tenfold death!—
Dismiss him to his Cottage. He has learn'd
To know you, Sir; this hour will never be
Forgotten by him or his Children's Children.

GESSLER.

Open a way there—Quick—[To Tell] Why lagg'st thou so?
Thy Life is forfeited; I can destroy thee;
And see, I mercifully leave thy fate
In thine own powerful and experienc'd hands.
He cannot sure complain of a hard measure,
Who thus stands Lord of his own destiny!
Thou boastest of thy steady eye and aim—
Well, Shotsman, now 's the time to shew them both;
The object's worthy and the prize is great.

WALTER FÜRST [throwing himself on his knees].

My Lord, we all acknowledge your supremacy;
Yet oh! let Right, for once, give way to Mercy.
Take half my Lands—take all of them—but spare,
Oh! spare a Father from this dreadful trial.

WALTER TELL.

Grandfather, kneel not down before that Man!
Say—where am I to stand?—I have no fears;
My Father hits a Bird upon the wing,
And will not miss, when his Child's life 's the stake.

STAUFFACHER.

Does not the innocence of this Child affect you?

RÖSSELMANN.

Remember that there is a God in Heaven,
To whom thou must account for all thy deeds.

GESSLER [pointing to the Boy].

Bind him to yonder Linden Tree.

WALTER TELL.

Bind me!
No, I will not be bound; I 'll kick and struggle.
But leave me free, and I 'll not stir a breath;
I 'll stand as still and quiet as a Lamb.

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS.

Consent, at least to let them bind your eyes.

WALTER TELL.

Why bind my eyes? Think you I am afraid of
An Arrow from my Father's hand?—I 'll wait it,
Nor even wink an eye at its approach.—

—Come, Father, show how good a Shot thou art.
The governor believes it not; He hopes
He shall destroy us; Frustrate his ill wishes;
Let fly thine Arrow and obtain the prize.
[The Boy goes to the Linden Tree and has the Apple placed on his head].

MELCHTHAL [to the Country-People].

What! Such an Outrage—and before our eyes?

STAUFFACHER [to Melchthal].

It is in vain—We have no arms—Thou seest
The forest of bright Lances bristling round us!

MELCHTHAL.

Oh! Had we gone to work immediately!
God forgive those, who counsell'd weak delay.

GESSLER [to Tell].

These Arms must not be practis'd with impunity.
Thou now wilt see the use of murderous weapons,
And how they may recoil upon the Bearer.
This usurp'd Right, this boasted Privilege,
—You Peasants arrogate—of going arm'd,
Offends the Lord and Sovereign of these Realms.
None, save your Lords, should be permitted it.
—But, since you needs must have your Bolts and Cross-bows
At least allow me to direct their use.

TELL.

Make way! Make way there!—[fitting an Arrow to his Bow].

STAUFFACHER.

What, Tell! Wouldst thou attempt it?—Oh! on no
Account—Thy Hand shakes—Thy whole frame 's convuls'd—

TELL.

My Brain swims — Every thing is whirling round me.
[Attempts to bend the Bow, but — his strength failing him — it drops from his hand].

WOMEN [schrieking].

O God in Heaven!

TELL [to the Governor].

Release me from this misery —
Here is my Heart [baring his bosom] —
Quick! Let thy Slaves despatch me!

GESSLER.

I will not have thy life — I 'll have the Shot.
— I know thee well — thou art a Man of all work! —
Nothing so desperate, but thou 'lt undertake it.
Thou guid'st the Rudder, as thou dost the Cross-bow —
No Storm appals thee, when a Friend 's in danger.
— Deliverer of others! Save thyself! —
[Tell stands in fearful agony, with his hands convulsively moving, and his eyes sometimes turned on Gessler, and sometimes raised to Heaven — then, on a sudden laying hold of his Quiver, he draws out a second Arrow, and sticks it in his Girdle — the Governor watching all his movements.]

WALTER TELL [under the Linden].

Shoot, Father! *I* am not afraid. —

TELL.

It must be!
[Collects himself and takes aim.]

RUDENZ.

[Who has been standing by, in violent agitation, and with difficulty restraining himself.]

Sir Governor! You would not press it further —
You would not surely — It was but a trial —

You have attain'd your end.—Severity, 1995
Urg'd to excess, fails always of its object.

GESSLER.

Peace! Silence 'till you 're call'd on—

RUDENZ.

I *will* speak—
I dare it—The King's name is sacred to me,
And Acts, like these, will bring it into scorn:
The King knows nothing of them, I dare swear it.
Such Cruelty towards an unoffending
People, would never meet *his* sanction.

GESSLER.

Hah!
Thou 'rt bold,—

RUDENZ.

Too long I 've held my tongue at all
The dreadful acts, which I was doom'd to witness;
My seeing Eye I clos'd—my swelling and
Revolting Heart I press'd down in my bosom—
But longer Silence would be Treason—Treason
Alike against my Country and the Emperor.

BERTHA [to Rudenz].

You do but irritate the Tyrant more.

RUDENZ.

I have forsaken mine own People—I have
Renounc'd my nearest kindred—all the bands
Of Nature have I rent—for your alliance—
'T is true, I did it with the best intent;
I thought, by strengthening thus the Cæsar's power,
I should, at least, secure my Country's peace.
But the Veil 's fallen from mine eyes—I see,

Shuddering I see, the Abyss, o'er which I stood—
The precipice to which you had beguil'd me.

GESSLER.

O Insolent! This language to thy Lord!

RUDENZ.

My Lord!—I own no Sovereign but the Cæsar!
Free am I born, as thou art, and dare measure
Myself with thee in every knightly Virtue:
And, if thou stood'st not in the Cæsar's name—
The Cæsar's Representative—the Cæsar—
Whom (despite of the scorn which thy foul Deeds
Are drawing on him) I could gladly honour—
I would throw down my glove to thee—and *thou*
As Knight to Knight, or Man to Man, shouldst answer it.
Ay, wink—wink to thy Guards, thy Slaves around thee—
I stand not unprepar'd, like these poor People
[pointing to the Peasants]
—I have a Sword—and who approaches me—

STAUFFACHER [with a loud voice].

The Apple 's fallen!

[While the attention of the People had been turned towards Rudenz and the Governor Tell has shot off the Arrow.]

RÖSSELMANN.

The Boy lives!

SEVERAL VOICES.

The Apple's hit!

[Walter Fürst totters and is falling, but is caught by Bertha.]

GESSLER [in amaze].

He has not shot! He has not!—How?—The Madman!

BERTHA [to Walter Fürst].

The Boy—He lives—Come to thyself, good Father.

WALTER TELL [darting towards his Father].

My Father, here 's the Apple — I knew well
Thou would'st not hurt thy Boy —

[Tell remains bent forward as if still following the Arrow—The Cross-Bow falls from his hand — and, as he sees the Boy coming, he rushes to meet him with outstretched arms and catches him with ardour to his bosom — In this state he falls senseless to Earth with the Child in his arms — All stand round them deeply affected.]

WALTER FÜRST [to the Father and Son].

My Children! My dear Children!

STAUFFACHER.

God be bless'd!

LEUTHOLD.

That was a Shot! It will be spoken of
In latest times.

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS.

They 'll talk of Tell, the Archer,
Long as these Hills shall rest on their foundations.
[Hands the Apple to the Governor.]

GESSLER.

By God! He has shot the Apple through the middle.
—It was a Master-Shot, I must allow it.

RÖSSELMANN.

Tell's shot was good; but woe to him that caus'd it—
To him, who drove him thus to tempt his Maker!

STAUFFACHER.

Come, cheer thee, Tell! — Stand up! — Right manfully
Hast thou perform'd thy part; thou 'rt free to go —

RÖSSELMANN.

Home with the Boy to his lone Mother's arms!
[They are leading Tell away.]

GESSLER.

Tell! hearken —

TELL [returning].

What 's your will, Sir?

GESSLER.

Thou hast yet
Another Shaft about thee — Nay — deny it not —
I saw it well — What didst thou mean by it?

TELL [embarrassed].

'T is nothing more than 's usual with all Shotsmen.

GESSLER.

No, Tell; I will not let that answer pass;
There was some hidden meaning in the thing.
— Freely — without reserve — declare the truth —
Be what it may — I guarantee thy life —
Declare the purport of that second Arrow.

TELL.

Well, Sir; since thus thou guaranteest my life;
I will avow it all — [Draws out the Arrow, and regarding Gessler with a stern look, continues —] This second Arrow —
If with the first I 'd chanc'd to slay my Child —
This second Shaft would I have shot at thee,
And — credit me — 't would not have miss'd its Mark.

GESSLER.

Tell, I have promis'd thee thy life; I pledg'd
My knightly Word to thee, and I will keep it.

Yet, knowing now thine evil disposition,
I cannot suffer thee to roam at large;
Some Dungeon's depth must be thy habitation.
There, where no beam of Sun or Moon finds entrance,
Debarr'd all flight or human intercourse,
Thou 'lt meditate thy schemes of death at leisure.
Then may I rest in safety from thine arrows.—
—Here, Guards! Seize on the Traitor—bind him!—
[Tell is bound.]

STAUFFACHER.

How, Sir!
Would'st thou thus treat the Man, in whose behalf
God's Hand hath been so visibly display'd!

GESSLER.

Let's see, if it will twice deliver him.
—Convey him to the Bark! I 'll follow quickly.
I will myself conduct him o'er to Küssnacht.

RÖSSELMANN.

Not thou, not e'en the Emperor, dare do it—
It is forbidden by our Country's Charters!

GESSLER.

Where are those Charters? Has the King confirm'd them?
—He has not confirm'd them; 't is a favour, which
Can only be obtain'd by your obedience.
Ye 're Rebels all against the Cæsar's power,
And aid each other in your mutual treasons.
I know you well—I see through all of you—
One of your number I now take with me,
Though all are equal Partners in his guilt.
Let him, who 's wise, learn silence and submission.
[He retires with his Train—Bertha and Rudenz following.]

WALTER FÜRST [in violent anguish].

It is all over;—The Tyrant!—He has sworn
Destruction against me and my whole House.

STAUFFACHER [to Tell].

Why wouldst thou irritate the Monster!

TELL.

Let him
Restrain himself, who has suffer'd half that I have.

STAUFFACHER.

O now is all, all over! Alas, with thee
We are all fetter'd all enslav'd—

COUNTRY-PEOPLE [round Tell].

Our last,
Last Hope departs from hence with thee.

LEUTHOLD [going up to Tell].

Tell! Tell!
My heart bleeds for thee—yet I must obey.

TELL.

Farewell!

WALTER TELL [embracing his Father in great agony].

O Father! Father! Dear, dear, Father!

TELL [raising his arms towards Heaven].

There is thy Father! Call on *Him!*

STAUFFACHER.

Say, Tell!
Can I bear aught of comfort to thy Wife!

TELL [raising the Boy with ardour to his breast].

The Boy 's unharm'd; and God will succour me.
[Tears himself away suddenly from the Child, and follows the Guard.]

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Eastern shore of the Lake — Fantastically-shaped and steep Rocks bounding the prospect on the West — Thunder, Lightning, and Storm — The Lake violently agitated.

KUNZ of Gersau — RUODI — and Fisher-Boy.

KUNZ.

I saw it with these eyes; you may believe it;
It happen'd all exactly as I tell you.

RUODI.

Tell! Tell a Prisoner, and sent off to Küssnacht!
The best Man in the Land, the stoutest Arm,
Should we have to make struggle for our Freedom.

KUNZ.

The Governor himself conducts him over;
They were just going to embark, as I
Came from Fluelen; yet the Storm, which forc'd me
To put in here, may have delay'd their voyage.

RUODI.

Tell in the Landgrave's power! He will be buried
— Believe me — deep enough! 'T will be long time

Ere he again behold the face of Day!
Well may the Tyrant dread the righteous vengeance
Of one he hath so bitterly oppress'd.

KUNZ.

The late Landamman, too, the noble Lord
Of Attinghausen, lies at his last gasp.

RUODI.

Thus parts the latest Anchor of our Hope!—
Who now will stand up for the People's right?
What Voice remains to plead in our behalf?

KUNZ.

The Tempest gathers darker. Fare you well!
No chance I see of crossing o'er to-day;
So I 'll e'en look for shelter in the Hamlet. [Exit.]

RUODI.

Tell!—Tell a Captive, and the Baron dead!
Lift high thy brow, insulting Tyranny,
Off with all shame! The Mouth of Truth is dumb,
The seeing Eye is clos'd, the Arm, which should
Redeem us all, itself alas! in chains.

FISHER-BOY.

'T is hailing hard; Let 's to the Cottage, Father;
It is not good to stand here in such Weather.

RUODI.

Rage, rage, ye Winds!—Flash, Lightnings!—Clouds of Heaven,
Pour down your cataracts, and drown the Land!
Destroy all germens of the unborn Race!—
Wild Elements, be Master!—Bears and Wolves,
Come, and resume your ancient habitation!

The Land belongs to you; Who, who would dwell here
Reft of its joy, its only life's-breath — Freedom?

FISHER-BOY.

Hark, how the Abyss is roaring! How the Lake —

RUODI.

To aim at his Child's head — Sure such a thing
Was never yet commanded to a Father!
This violation of first Nature's Laws —
O, 't were enough to rouse all Nature's vengeance,
To loose the solid Mountains, to call down
Yon everlasting Glaciers from their throne,
And with a second Deluge whelm Mankind. [A Bell is hea

FISHER-BOY.

Hark to the Bell from out the Mountain Chapel!
— Some Bark is in distress, and they are going
To put up prayers for the poor Souls on board.
[Ascends an Eminence.]

RUODI.

Woe to the Bark, that now is under weigh,
Toss'd up and down within its Storm-rock'd Cradle!
Rudder and Oar are vain; the Storm is Master;
And Wind and Wave play football with their Victim.
There is no friendly Bay to give them shelter;
Precipitously steep, on every side,
The inhospitable Cliffs are frowning o'er them.

FISHER-BOY [pointing to the left].

Father, a Boat! It 's coming from Flüelen.

RUODI.

God pity the poor Creatures, that are in it!
— Once caught within these Clefts, the Storm beats, lil

Some Beast of prey, against its narrow prison,
Foaming and roaring for escape in vain. [Ascends the Rock].

FISHER-BOY.

It is the Landgrave's Barge from Uri, Father;
I know it well by the red Flag and Awning.

RUODI.

All-righteous God! Yes, it is he himself;
It is the Governor, that 's passing yonder!
There goes the Tyrant, and his Crimes 'long with him —
How soon hath Vengeance reach'd him! Now he knows
That there is yet a greater Lord than he is.
Nor Winds, nor Waves, obey him; No tall Rocks
Bow down *their* heads in homage to his Hat!
—Boy, pray not for him—Leave him to his Judge.

FISHER-BOY.

I pray not for the Governor, I pray
For Tell, who is with him—

RUODI.

O blind Elements!
And must you then, to reach one guilty Head,
O'erwhelm the Boat with all its hapless Crew?

FISHER-BOY.

They 're past the Buggisgrat; but the Storm's might
Rebounding from the Devil's-Minster, hurls them
Back on the Axenberg—I see no more.

RUODI.

There is the Hackmesser, and, without caution,
They 'll be in pieces on its rocks; full many
A better Ship than theirs hath perish'd there.

—They luckily have one good Hand on board;
If any Man can save them, it is Tell;
But then alas! he 's fetter'd arm and foot.

Enter TELL with his Cross-Bow.

[He enters precipitately, looking round with agitation and astonishment. When in the middle of the stage, he throws himself on his knees, extending his hands to Earth, and then towards Heaven.]

FISHER-BOY [observing him.]

Look, Father, at that Man upon his knees!

RUODI.

He 's clinging to the earth with both his hands—
He seems beside himself.

FISHER-ROY [coming forwards].

What do I see?
Quick! Father, come and look—

RUODI.

Who is it?—Heavens,
'T is Tell! How cam'st thou hither?—

FISHER-BOY.

Wert thou not
A Prisoner and bound, on board the Bark?

RUODI.

Wast thou not forc'd away in chains to Küssnacht?

TELL.

I have escap'd.

RUODI and FISHER-BOY.

Escap'd! O wondrous Heaven!

FISHER-BOY.

Whence come you now?

TELL.

From yonder Bark.

FISHRR-BOY.

Where is
The Governor?

TELL.

He 's drifting on the waves.

RUODI.

Is 't possible? But Thou — how cam'st thou here?
Escap'd both chains and tempest —

TELL.

Yes, through God's
All-gracious Providence — But I 'll tell you all.

RUODI and FISHER-BOY.

O, tell us, tell us!

TELL.

What occur'd at Altdorf,
Perchance, you 've heard —

RUODI.

Yes, all! And how the Governor
Was carrying you, bound hand and foot, to Küssnacht —
We know it all. But say, how you escap'd?
Proceed —

TELL.

Fast-fetter'd, in the Boat, I lay
Defenceles — a lost Man — all hope extinguish'd

Of ever seeing light of the glad Sun—
Of ever seeing Wife or Children more—
And comfortless, scarce knowing what I sought,
I gaz'd abroad o'er the wild waste of Waters—

RUODI.

Alas, poor Man!

TELL.

There were we sweeping on,
The Governor, Der-Harras, and the Soldiers.
(My Bow and Quiver lay beside the helm)—
But scarcely had we near'd the little Axen,
When, rushing from the Gotthardt's dark abyss,
A sudden Storm o'ertook our trembling Pinnace,
In foaming eddies whirling up the Deep,
And threatening all with instant dissolution.
—The Rowers dropp'd their oars, the Steersman's Hand
Forsook the rudder, and the boldest Hearts
Shrank, shuddering on the edge of life and death.
—Then spake the Governor—"Tell! Thou 'rt a Steersman,
And couldst thou help us to escape the Storm,
Who knows but I might free thee from thy fetters!"
—To which I answer'd, that, I 'd try my best,
And hop'd with God's assistance to succeed—
—So, loosen'd from my bonds, I took the helm,
And safely steer'd the Vessel through the Storm.
Yet, ever and anon, I glanc'd mine eye
Along the coasts, exploring far and near,
Some vantage spot, where, as Occasion offer'd,
I might spring out, and thus elude the Foe:
And seeing now a small projecting Reef—

RUODI.

I know the spot; it juts out at the base
Of the great Axen; yet should I have deem'd it

Impossible—so steep is the ascent—
For any bound of mortal foot to reach it.

TELL.

I bade the Rowers ply their arm with vigour
Untill they came before the rocky Plat—
—"There"—(said I)—"all the roughest will be past"—
And now, by briskly rowing, we had reach'd it;
When suddenly—first having seiz'd my Cross-bow,
And breathing all the while a prayer to Heaven—
I swang myself upon the Plat above,
High-springing with a bound, and sending back
The stagger'd Boat into the whirl of Waters!—
There—with God's will—may she drift on at leisure.
—Thus am I here, escap'd the Storm's dread power,
And, dreader still, the power of evil Men.

RUODI.

Tell, Tell, what wonders hath God wrought for thee!
I scarcely dare to credit mine own senses.—
But what are thy resolves as to the future,
For—should the Governor survive the Storm
There 's no security for thee in Uri?

TELL.

Whilst lying in the Boat, I heard him say,
That he should land at Brunnen, and from thence
Convey me to his Castle beyond Schwytz.

RUODI.

Will he go thence by land?

TELL.

So he intended.

RUODI.

O, then conceal thyself without delay;
God may not twice redeem thee from his hands.

TELL.

Which is the nearest way to Arth and Küssnacht?

RUODI.

The public Road's by Steinen; but my Boy
Can shew you a securer one by Lowerz.

TELL [giving him his hand].

Farewell, and God reward thee! [goes and returns]
Wert thou not
One of the Sworn at Rütli?—Methinks thy Name
Was mention'd to me.

RUODI.

I was there and took
The solemn Oath of the Confederation.

TELL.

Then haste to Bürglen—(Do this kindness for me)—
My Wife is in despair about my absence—
Inform her of my safety and escape.

RUODI.

Yet whither, shall I say, that, you have fled?

TELL.

My Brother-in-law is with her, and another
Of the Confederates: Say, that you have seen me,
And bid them be of courage and good cheer;
If Tell be free and Master of his arm,
'T will not be long, ere they hear further of him.

RUODI.

What 's in your thoughts?—Disclose it freely to me.

TELL.

The Deed will be no sooner done than known. [Exit.]

RUODI [to the Boy].

Johnny, shew him the way.—May God be with him,
And grant success to all his undertakings!

SCENE II.

The Castle of Attinghausen—The Baron lying in an Arm-Chair and at the point of death — Walter Fürst, Stauffacher, Melchthal and Baumgarten in attendance on him—Walter Tell kneeling at his side—

WALTER FÜRST.

Alas! 't is over with him; he is gone.

STAUFFACHER.

There 's no appearance yet of death upon him;
His Slumber 's light and tranquil as a Babe's;
And see, his Lips still breathe, and each kind Feature
Is lighted up with its accustom'd smile.

[Baumgarten goes to the door and speaks to some one.]

WALTER FÜRST.

Who 's there?

BAUMGARTEN.

It is your Daughter, Mistress Hedwige,
She wants to speak with you, and see the Boy.

WALTER FÜRST.

Where, where can I find comfort for her?—Where
Find comfort for myself?—Sure, Fate hath made
This head a butt for all its keenest arrows.

HEDWIGE [forcing herself in.]

Where is my Child? I must, I will, behold him.

STAUFFACHER.

Hush! Recollect you 're in the house of Death.

HEDWIGE [rushing to her Child].

My Walty! O dost thou yet live for me?

WALTER TELL [hanging on his Mother's neck].

Mother! Dear Mother!

HEDWIGE [regarding him anxiously].

Art thou then unhurt?—
And was it possible that he could do it—
That he could aim an Arrow at his Child?
How could he do so? O, he has no heart.

WALTER FÜRST.

He did it through constraint; with anguish'd soul
He did it; Disobedience had been death.

HEDWIGE.

O, if he had a Father's heart, he would
Have sooner died a thousand deaths than do it.

STAUFFACHER.

You should be grateful to God's providence,
It has not ended worse.

HEDWIGE.

Can I forget
How it might have ended? — God of Heaven! If I
Live to an hundred, I shall always see
The Boy, shall see his Father shooting at him,
Shall feel the Arrow rankling at my heart!

MELCHTHAL.

You know not how the Governor provok'd him.

HEDWIGE.

Hard heart of Men! Intent on self alone.
Offend their pride — they think of nothing more;
There is no game so desperate but they 'll play it
For love of vengeance or for love of fame.
The Infant's head, the Mother's bleeding heart,
Stand nought betwixt them and their wounded greatness!

BAUMGARTEN.

Is not thy Husband's Cup o'erfull already
Or wouldst thou drug it with fresh bitterness?
Hast thou no pity for *his* miseries?

HEDWIGE [turning round and surveying him with a stern look].

And hast thou only tears for his misfortune?
— Where were ye all, when he was rapt in chains?
Where then your boasted Friendship? — Ye look'd on,
Ye suffer'd the enormity to pass,
Ye saw him borne away before your face! —
Would Tell have dealt so with his Friends? Has he
So dealt with thee? [to Baumgarten] — Did he stand dallying thus
When the dark Wildgrave's Pack yell'd at thy heels,
And the Lake foam'd with death before thine Eyes?
No, not in idle tears did he exhaust
His love; He sprang into the Boat — forgot
Home, Wife, and Children — and deliver'd thee. —

WALTER FÜRST.

Alas! What could we do for his deliverance?
So small our numbers — and unarm'd —

HEDWIGE [throwing herself on her Father's bosom].

O Father!
Thou too hast lost him! Thou, and I, and all,
— Wife, Children, Friends, and Country — all have lost him.
He is wanting to us! We are wanting to him!
O God, preserve his bosom from despair.
No Friend to comfort him — Should he fall sick!
Alas, in the damp darkness of a Dungeon,
He must fall sick — For, as the Alpine Rose
Droops, fades, and dies, beneath the Marish shade;
There is no life for Tell, save in the suns,
Save in the balm, of his own breezy Mountains.
A Prisoner! — He — whose breath of life was Freedom,
The Dungeon and the Grave to him are one.

STAUFFACHER.

Come, comfort thee: It shall be our endeavour
To break his bondage —

HEDWIGE.

What can ye without him?
As long as Tell was free — yes! there was Hope.
The Opprest found a Protector; Innocence
Had then a Friend. Tell would have sav'd you all;
But all together cannot rescue him!

[The Baron awakes.]

BAUMGARTEN.

He is stirring — hush!

ATTINGHAUSEN [raising himself].

Where is he?

STAUFFACHER.

Who?

ATTINGHAUSEN.

I want him;
e deserted me in my last moments?

STAUFFACHER [to Fürst].

ans his Nephew.—Have you sent for him?

WALTER FÜRST.

ve sent for him.—Sir, be comforted!
s found his heart, He is our own—

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Has he
spoken for his Fatherland?

STAUFFACHER.

Ay, Sir,
manfully—

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Thank God! Thank God! But why
not here to receive my last blessing?—
el that it will soon be over with me.

STAUFFACHER.

—I hope not. This short Sleep 's refresh'd you,
our Eye 's strong and clear.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

All pain 's extinct;
in was life; now pain and hope forsake me.
[Observes Walter Tell.]
Boy is that?

WALTER FÜRST.

Give him your blessing, Sir;
my Grandson and left fatherless.
lwige kneels down with the Boy before the dying Man.]

ATTINGHAUSEN.

And fatherless I leave you all—all fatherless—
Alas! that these old Eyes are doom'd to see
The downfall of their dear-lov'd Fatherland!
—Was I reserv'd for this, Life's farthest, limit,
But to behold Life's hopes all perish with me?

STAUFFACHER [aside to Fürst].

Must he depart in darkness, and shall no
Kind gleam of Hope console his setting Day!—
—Cheer, cheer thee, noble Sir; God hath not left us
All-desolate, all-lost, without redemption.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

Who will deliver you?

WALTER FÜRST.

Even we ourselves—
Pledg'd are our Cantons to expel the Tyrants.
The League is form'd; a sacred Oath hath bound us;
And, ere the year renew its circling course,
'T will be accomplish'd—Yes! thine honour'd Dust
Shall have repose within a Land of Freedom.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

The League concluded!

MELCHTHAL.

Ay, Sir!—Untill now
The Secret has been kept, though shar'd by Hundreds—
On the same day will the three Cantons rise;
All is prepar'd; Oppression's Hours are number'd,
Already yawns the Earth beneath her feet;
Soon will She sink, nor leave a wreck behind.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

But the Strongholds?

MELCHTHAL.

They 'll fall on the same day.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

And are our Nobles sharers in the League?

STAUFFACHER.

I doubt not their assistance, when 't is needed.
As yet the only Actors are the People.

ATTINGHAUSEN.
[Raising himself in great astonishment.]

They have done this, and done it all alone!
They have done this, and without aid of Nobles! —
All is not lost; through other arms, than ours,
The dignity of Man will be asserted;
And *we* may go in comfort to our graves.
[Lays his hand on the head of the Boy, who is kneeling before him].
Yes, on this head, where late the Apple lay,
Soon shall a new and better Freedom rise;
Time changes; (good or bad) the Old hath fallen,
And a new Life is blooming from its ruins.

STAUFFACHER.

See, what a lustre streams around his eyes!
That Flash! 'T was not the extinguishment of Nature;
It almost seem'd the Dawn of a new Day.

ATTINGHAUSEN.

E'en now descending from their ancient Castles
Proud Knights and Nobles take the oaths of Burghers;

In Uechtland, and in Thurgau, 't is begun;
Illustrious Bern lifts high her laurell'd head;
Bold Zurich trains her Citizens to Soldiers;
And Freyburg — worthy of the glorious name —
Becomes, once more, a Refuge for the Free.
The might of Kings collects and spends itself
In vain, against these everlasting Walls.

[He utters the following in a prophetic tone, rising sometimes to enthusiasm.]

I see proud Austria's power advancing on you —
Her Knights, her Princes, her embattled Squadrons,
And all to crush a Nation of poor Herdsmen! —
— Desperate the struggle — one of life and death —
And many a Pass, ennobled by the tryal,
Shall ring in echoes of undying Fame.
With naked breast upon their serried Lances,
Forth springs the willing Victim to his doom!
The breach is made — cowed Austria's Chivalry —
Her Flower, her Pride of Manhood, press the plain —
And Freedom high, waves high her conquering banner.
[Waving his arm, and then grasping Fürst's and Stauffacher's hands.]
— Hold fast together — firm and true — Be not
One Nook of Freedom stranger to another —
Set instant Watches on the Hills, that League
May answer League and rise in mutual succour.
— *A Nation to be free must be united!*
Then aid not Tyranny by your divisions,
But stand together — one and all — And *this* —
Be *this* the Freeman's Watchword — *Union* — *Union* — *Union* —
[He falls back on the Cushion — his lifeless Hands still grasping those of his Friends Fürst and Stauffacher, who, after contemplating him for some time in silence, retire to indulge their grief — In the mean time, the Servants, pressing in, quietly approach their old Master with signs, some of stiller, others of more violent grief — and two or three of them kneeling before him and weeping over his hands — During this mute scene the Castle Bell rings.]

RUDENZ [entering with precipitation].

O, does he live? Say, say, can he yet hear me?

FÜRST [pointing towards the Deceased].

This ancient Castle owns another Master,
And you are now our liege Lord and Protector.

RUDENZ [gazing at the dead Body in deep anguish].

O God, is my repentance then too late!
Could he not breathe, but a few pulses longer,
To see this alter'd heart,—I have contemn'd
His living voice—and now he 's gone—forever
Gone—and leaves me a heavy debt uncancell'd!
—Did he not curse me with his parting breath?

STAUFFACHER.

He heard, whilst dying, what had pass'd at Altdorf,
And prais'd and bless'd the spirit you display'd.

RUDENZ [kneeling by the Deceased].

Yes, holy Relics of the best of Men!
Inanimate Existence! Here I swear—
On this dear hand now cold in death—I swear
Renunciation of all foreign ties.
I break—I have already broken—them
Forever; I 'm restor'd to mine own People.
Henceforth I am a Switzer, heart and soul. [Rising up].
Mourn for your Friend, the Father of us all—
Mourn, but despair not!—Not alone is his
Inheritance—his Heart and Soul are—mine.
His Spirit will descend on me, and what
From his grey age was owing to the Country,
'T will be my Youth's first glory to fulfill.
—Father, thy Hand [to Fürst]—and thine [to Stauffacher]—
and, Melchthal, thine—

Nay, hesitate not — Turn not thus away —
Receive my faith and vow —

WALTER FÜRST.

Give him thy hand!
Sure, his returning Heart may claim our love.

MELCHTHAL [to Rudenz].

Thou hast shewn no regard unto thy People —
What has the Country to expect from thee?

RUDENZ.

O think not of the errors of my Youth.

STAUFFACHER [to Melchthal].

Come, be united! — What were the last words
Of our dear Father? Think of them —

MELCHTHAL [holding out his hand].

Here, take it —
A Peasant's hand — and with it, noble Sir,
The gage and the assurance of a Man!
What would you Knights and Nobles be without us?
Our Order is an older one than yours.

RUDENZ.

I honour, and shall glory to protect, it.

MELCHTHAL.

The Arm, my Lord, that turns up the hard soil,
And makes its bosom fertile, wants not power
To wield the sword and guard the breasts of Men.

RUDENZ.

Well, thou shalt guard my breast, as I will thine;
So shall we each grow stronger through the other.

—But why thus waste our time in vain debate,
Whilst our dear Fatherland yet lies a prey
To foreign Foes—Let's cleanse the Soil of them,
And then decide our friendly controversy.
[After a Moment's pause.]
Ye 're silent! Have ye nothing to inform me?
Or am I still unworthy of your trust?
—Then must I force myself into your councils.
Your Silence is in vain—I know the whole—
Your Midnight Meetings, and your Oaths at Rütli—
I know the whole—and, though not trusted with
Your Secret, yet have I devoutly kept it.—
I never was my Country's Foe, believe me;
I never acted against her or you.
—But why defer the glorious enterprize?
Time presses on and calls for action—Tell
Already pays the price of your delay.

STAUFFACHER.

Alas! we 're bound to wait for the new year.

RUDENZ.

I was not at your Meeting—I 'm not bound—
Wait those, that list it—I shall act—

MELCHTHAL.

What! would you?

RUDENZ.

I count myself amongst the Country's Fathers,
And their first duty 's to protect her Children.

WALTER FÜRST.

To lay these dear Remains in hallowed earth—
That, noble Sir, 's your first and nearest duty.

RUDENZ.

Not 'till the Land is free:—*Then* will we bury him,
And with fresh wreaths of triumph crown his Bier.
—Alas! my Friends, not in your cause alone;
In mine own also have I to contend
Against the Tyrant!—Know ye, that my Bertha
Has disappear'd, snatch'd off from midst of us
By sudden violence—

STAUFFACHER.

Hath the Tyrant dar'd
So foul an act against a noble Lady?

RUDENZ.

Alas! my Friends, I promis'd you mine aid,
And I have first to supplicate for yours.
Stol'n, torn away, from me is my Beloved.
Who knoweth where the Monster hath conveyed her;
What means, what outrage, he may not attempt
To force her into a detested marriage!
Desert me not—assist me to redeem her—
She loves you, loves our Country! Oh, she merits
That every Arm should rise in her behalf!

WALTER FÜRST.

What would you, we should do?

RUDENZ.

Alas! I know not.
In the dark night which now involves her doom,
With all these agonies of doubt around me,
And not a gleam of certainty to guide us,
—One path alone seems open—We must straight
To Sarnen and to Rotzberg—we must down
With those Strong-Holds of Tyrant-power—'t is there

Alone we 've chance to find her—'tis but from
Their ruins we can hope to disinterr her.

MELCHTHAL.

Come, lead the way, and I will follow you.
The work we 're able to perform to-day,
Why should it be deferr'd untill the Morrow?
Tell was in freedom, when we met at Rütli;
That Outrage had not then been perpetrated.
But Time brings other counsels, other laws—

RUDENZ [to Fürst and Stauffacher].

Meantime, all arm'd and well prepar'd for action,
Wait 'till the flaming Beacons from the Hills
Announce the tidings of our Victory!
Then swift, as Lightning-Flash, upon your Foes,
And down with the whole Edifice of Tyranny—
With Tyranny and Tyrants altogether.

SCENE III.

The Hollow Way near Küssnacht — A Descent from between Rocks behind, through which Travellers may be seen approaching from the height before they appear on the stage — Rocks surround the whole Scene, — one of them projecting someway forward and overgrown with Shrubs and Bushes. —

Enter TELL with his Cross-Bow.

Here, through this hollow Way, must he descend!
There is no other Road that leads to Küssnacht—
Here will I do it—The Site 's favourable.
Yon Elder-Bush will shadow me; from thence
My Shaft may reach him; while the narrowness

Of the way will be a check to my Pursuers.
Make thine account with Heaven, Lord Governor!
Thou must away; thy Hour is nigh-run down.
I liv'd in peace and harmlessness—My Bow
Was never bent but at the Forest-Prey;
My thoughts were innocent of human Blood—
But thou hast scar'd me from my peace; hast turn'd
My milk of kindness into Dragon's gall
And poison; thou hast reconcil'd me
To deeds, which erst my Soul had shrunk to think of.
—He, who has shot at his Child's head, will reck
But little for the heart's-blood of his Foe.
My Children, the dear Innocents—my fond
And faithful Wife—I must protect them—Yes,
I *will* protect them, Tyrant, from thy fury!
Even whilst I drew the Bowstring—whilst my Hand
Yet trembled—whilst, with fiendish, fell delight,
Thou drov'st me on to aim at mine own Child—
Whilst powerless, weeping, I fell down before thee,
Even then I swore—and God hath heard the oath—
—Within my deepest soul, with fearful oath,
I swore that, my next Shot should be *thy* Heart—
What, in the hellish anguish of the moment,
I vowed to Heaven, is now a sacred Debt;
And I will pay it.—
Thou art my Master and the Cæsar's Governor;
Yet not the Cæsar sanctions deeds like thine.
He sent thee here to administer the Law—
Strict Law, severest Justice—for he 's angry—
But not to violate and tread down both;
Not to give licence to thy murderous lusts,
And with impunity to scourge thy kind:
There lives a God to punish and avenge.
Welcome, thou Harbinger of bitter pains,
My dearest Treasure now, mine only Hope—

I 'll find thee soon an object, which, howe'er
Impenetrable to my prayers and anguish,
Will not resist thy stronger argument—
And thou, my trusty Bowstring, that so oft
Hast serv'd thy Master in his joyous Sports,
Forsake me not in this dread hour of Earnest!
Hold firm, my tried and faithful, that so oft
Hast wing'd mine arrow to its flying Prey—
Stand firm and true but this once more—Let not
My Shaft escape thee with impunity;
I have no second to supply its loss.

[Travellers pass over the Scene.

Here, where the Traveller takes his short repose,
(No home or other place of rest is near)
Upon this rocky bench I 'll set me down.
Here, from all Quarters, are they passing—Each
Too busy in himself to think of others—
The care-worn Merchant, and the light-girt Pilgrim,
The pious Monk, and the laborious Hind,
The gloomy Robber, and the blithe Musician,
The Carrier, with his heavy-laden Beast,
Rich from far Lands—Each passeth by, intent
On his own business—and *Mine* is Murder!

[Sits down on the Rock.]

Till now, the Father never went from home,
But Joy, such Joy! awaited his return.
He always brought back something for his Children,
Some Alpine Flower, rare Bird, or precious Fossil,
Such as the Wanderer finds by Stream and Mountain—
—Alas! how different his Employment now!
He sits by the wild way with thoughts of death;
'T is his Foe's life for which he lies in wait.—
And yet, dear Children, he but thinks of you
Even now;—'tis to preserve your lives, 'tis to
Save your sweet innocence from wrong and danger,

He now sends forth his bolt at the Destroyer. [Rises]
—Well, I am watching for a noble Quarry—
No toil the Hunter grudges—heedless still
Of pain or death, he roves the wintry Wild,
Springs hazardous from rock to rock, climbs up
The Ice-walls, clings to them in his own blood,
And all—all to hunt down a poor, weak, timid Creature.—
But here 's a prize of costlier, prouder worth,
The heart's-blood of the Foe, that would destroy me.
[Lively Music first heard at a distance and then gradually nearer.]
All my life long have I been us'd to shooting;
The Bow I 've handled from my earliest youth;
Oft have I hit the Bull's eye, and borne home
Full many a prize from pleasant Shooting Matches—
But I will make a Master-Shot to-day,
And bear off the best prize in all the Mountains.
[A Wedding passes over the Scene and up through the hollow Way—
Tell contemplates it in silence, leaning upon his Bow.]

Enter STÜSSI.

It is the Convent-Farmer from Mörlschachen
That passes with his Train—a wealthy Man—
Has matter of ten Pastures on the Alps.
He's fetching home his Bride from Immensee,
And holds his Wedding Feast, to-night, at Küssnacht.
Come with me! Every honest Man 's invited.

TELL.

A serious Guest ill suits the Marriage-House.

STÜSSI.

Does Care oppress thee?—Cast it from thy heart!
Take well what comes; the Times indeed are hard;
So make the most of pleasure, when it offers.
Here they are marrying—elsewhere, perhaps, burying!—

TELL.

ɔne too oft treads on the heels of th' other.

STÜSSI.

es the World, Misfortune meets us everywhere.
aris there has been a Landslip, and
ɔne Half of the Glärnisch 's fallen in.

TELL.

'en our Mountains shaking? Nought alas!
s fast on Earth.

STÜSSI.

There 're Wonders everywhere.
ke with one, who 'd just arriv'd from Baden
ight, he says, was riding to the King,
ɔn the way a Swarm of Hornets met him,
a, falling on his Horse, so stang the Animal,
ɔpp'd down dead with torture, and the Knight
fain to reach his Majesty on foot.

TELL.

ıg is oftimes giv'n e'en to the Weakest.

HART enters with several Children and stations herself at the entrance of Hollow-Way.

STÜSSI.

hese things be, and not betoken something—
evil to the Country—some dire deed,
volt, against Nature?—

TELL.

Every day
's such; there needs not Wonders to announce them.

STÜSSI.

Ah! well for him, who cultivates his Field
And dwells at home, in quiet, with his own.

TELL.

Not the most harmless can abide in peace,
If 'tis displeasing to his evil Neighbour.

[Tell looks every now and then up the hollow Way with restless expectation.]

STÜSSI.

Farewell; you are expecting some one here?

TELL.

I am.

STÜSSI.

A happy Journey to you home.
Are you of Uri? We are just now expecting
Our gracious Lord, the Governor, from thence.

A TRAVELLER [entering].

You will not see the Governor to-day.
The Rivers, swollen by the recent Rains,
Have broken down the Bridges.

ARMGART [coming forwards].

What say'st thou?
The Landgrave comes not!

STÜSSI.

Are you seeking him?

ARMGART.

Ay, sure!

STÜSSI.

But do not thus block up his way.

ARMGART.

Here he must hear me—here he can't escape me.

FRIESSHARDT [galloping down the hollow way.]

Way for the Governor! My gracious Lord,
The Governor is on horseback just behind me! [Exit Tell.]

ARMGART [with animation].

The Governor comes!
[Goes with her Children into the front of the Scene—Gessler and Rudolph der Harras appear on horseback at the top of the Road.]

STÜSSI [to Friesshardt].

How did you pass the Waters?
The Floods, they say, have swept off all the Bridges.

FRIESSHARDT.

After our desperate struggle with the Lake,
We thought but little of the Alpine Waters.

STÜSSI.

What, were you out in that tremendous Storm!

FRIESSHARDT.

Ay, that we were—I never shall forget it.

STÜSSI.

O stop, and tell me—

FRIESSHARDT.

Not now—I must onwards
To announce the coming of the Governor. [Exit.]

STÜSSI.

Had there been any one on board, worth saving,
Down to the bottom, Man and Mouse, they 'd gone.
But Folks, like these, can brave both Fire and Water.
—Where is the Hunter I was talking with? [Exit.]

Enter GESSLER and RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, on horseback.

GESSLER.

Say what you will, I am the Cæsar's Servant,
And must consider how I best can please him.
He has not sent me to these States, to flatter
And fawn upon the People—He expects
Obedience; and the Question now is, whether
The Peasant or the Cæsar shall be Master?

ARMGART.

This is the moment; now will I address him!
[Approaches trembling.]

GESSLER.

'T was not by way of Jest, that I stuck up
The Hat in Altdorf—No, nor yet to prove
The People's hearts—Those I knew long ago—
I set it up, that they might learn obedience,
That they might learn to bend those stubborn Necks,
Which now they bear aloft in such defiance—
I planted the annoyance in their way,
That they might be reminded of their duty,
And of that Master, whom they 'd else forget.

RUDOLPH.

But surely, Sir, the People have *some* Rights—

GESSLER.

This is no time for such considerations!

The People's duty now is to obey.—
High Matters are in progress; The Emperor's House
Must be exalted; what so gloriously
The Sire began, his noble Son will finish.
These little States are stumbling Blocks before us:
At all events, *they* must be taught submission.

[They are passing on, when Armgart throws herself at the Governor's feet.]

ARMGART.

Mercy, Lord Governor! Mercy, mercy, pardon!

GESSLER.

What 's this intrusion? — Here — in the High-road —
Woman! Away —

ARMGART.

My Husband lies in Prison;
My fainting Children cry for bread; Have mercy,
Dread Lord, take pity on our wretchedness.

RUDOLPH.

Who are you? What 's your Husband?

ARMGART.

A Wild-Hayman
Of the Righi Mountains, who supports his family
By gathering the free grass about the Cliffs
And o'er the Abysses, where no Cattle venture.

RUDOLPH [to the Governor].

By Heaven! A wretched, pitiable life!
I do beseech you, Sir, discharge her Husband!
Whate'er the Man's offence, his occupation,
His dreadful trade, is punishment enough.

[To the Woman.]

Woman, take your petition to the Castle—
There you 'll have justice—This is not the place.

ARMGART.

No, no, I will not leave this place, untill
The Governor has given me back my Husband.
Already has he lain six months in prison,
Waiting the sentence of his Judge in vain.

GESSLER.

Woman, would you resist me?—Back!—Be gone!

ARMGART.

Justice, Lord Governor! Thou art our Judge,
And sitt'st here in the Cæsar's and God's place.
Then do me right! Yes, as thou hop'st from Heaven
For justice, render it to me and mine!

GESSLER.

Away with her!—Off with her insolence.

ARMGART [laying hold of the Horse's bridle].

No, no, I 've nothing more to lose.—Lord Governor,
Thou stirr'st not from this spot, 'till thou hast done me
Justice—Nay, knit thy brow and roll thine eyes—We are
So woe-begone, so steep'd in misery,
We reck not of thine anger.

GESSLER.

Woman, hence!
Make way, or else my Horse shall trample on you.

ARMGART.

Ay, let it trample on me—here [throwing herself with her Children before him] here I lie—

Here with my Children — Let thine Horses' hoof
Crush my poor Babes! It will not be the worst
Of thy Misdoings!

RUDOLPH.

Woman! Art thou mad?

ARMGART [with increasing violence].

Long hast thou trod the Country under foot!
— I am but a poor weak Woman! Would to God
I were a Man! I should know better than
To grovel here in dust — [The former Music is again heard].

GESSLER.

Where are my Servants?
Let them remove her quickly, or I shall
Forget myself and do what may repent me.

RUDOLPH.

My Lord, the Servants cannot pass the Crowd;
A Wedding Party has block'd up the way.

GESSLER.

By God! I am much too mild a Governor;
The People's spirit is not half-subdued;
Their thoughts, their tongues, are both too free; but soon
It shall be otherwise, I promise them.
— I 'll break this obstinate resistance, I 'll
Curb their audacious boasts of Freedom, I 'll
Promulgate a *new* Law troughout the Land —
— By God! I *will* — [An Arrow pierces him, and he puts his hand to his heart, exclaiming with a faint voice.] O God, have mercy on me!

RUDOLPH.

Lord Governor! — Heavens! What is it? From whence
Came it? —

ARMGART [starting up].

He faints! He staggers! Murder! Murder!
The Governor is shot!

RUDOLPH [springing from his Horse].

O wretched End!
Just Heaven!—Lord Governor, implore God's mercy!
Thou art a Man of death!

GESSLER.

It was Tell's arrow!

[Falls from his Horse into Rudolph's arms and is carried to a bank.]

TELL [appearing on the Rocks above].

Thou know'st the Shooter, look not for another!
Our Homes are free, and Innocence secure!
Thou wilt'st inflict no further wrongs upon us.
[Disappears from the Height].

STÜSSI [coming forward].

What is the matter? What has happen'd here?

ARMGART.

The Landgrave has been shot through with an Arrow.

PEOPLE [pressing in].

Who has been shot?

[Whilst the foremost of the Wedding Procession come on the stage, the hindermost are on the height, with the Music still playing.]

RUDOLPH.

He bleeds to death—Away!
Procure assistance!—Seize the Murderer!—
—Lost Man! Thus must it end with thee!—Yet thou
Wouldst never hear my warnings—

STÜSSI.

There he lies,
All-pale and lifeless!

SEVERAL VOICES.

Who has done the deed?

RUDOLPH.

The People must be mad! Is this a time
For Music? Silence with it! Silence —

[Music ceases — more People come pressing on the stage.]

RUDOLPH.

Lord Governor! Have you no last wishes? Nothing
You would confide to me? — Speak, if you are able —
Where shall we carry you? — To Küssnacht? —

[Gessler makes signs with his hands, which, finding them not understood by the Bystanders, he repeats with vehemence.]

RUDOLPH.

Alas!
I understand you not — Don't be impatient —
Leave Earthly things, and make your peace with Heaven.

[The whole Wedding Party assemble round the dying Man with the greatest apathy and indifference.]

STÜSSI.

How pale he grows! Now — now Death 's at his heart —
His Eyes are bursting —

ARMGART [lifting up one of her Children].

See a Tyrant die!

RUDOLPH.

Mad Woman! Is all feeling then extinct
Within thy heart, that thou would'st feed thine own

And Children's eyes with horrors such as these?—
—Help—Lend a hand—Will no one here assist me
To draw the painful Arrow from his breast?

WOMEN [drawing back].

We touch him! *Him*, whom God's own Hand hath slain!

RUDOLPH.

Hell and Damnation on you all! [Draws his Sword].

STÜSSI [falling on his arm].

Dare do it!
Your Reign is over, Sir! The Tyrant 's fallen!
We will endure no farther violence—
—We are free—are Freemen all—

PEOPLE [tumultuously].

The Land is free!

RUDOLPH.

And is it come to this?—Fear and Obedience—
Are they so quickly at an end?
[to the Soldiers and armed Servants]
You see
The monstrous deed, which has been perpetrated;
All help, all pursuit of the Murderer, is
Vain; other Cares press on us; We must off
To Küssnacht, to preserve the Cæsar's Castle.
All Order, Loyalty, and Sense of Duty,
Are now dissolv'd; There 's not a Soul about us
On whose fidelity we can rely—[Exeunt Rudolph and Soldiers].

STÜSSI.

Already are the Ravens lowering o'er him.

ARMGART.

Room! Room! Here come the Charitable Brothers.

Enter SIX BROTHERS OF CHARITY, who, forming a half-circle round the dead Man, sing the following Lines in a deep tone.

Fast at our heels Death presses on,
  There is no respite from his rigour.
Man breathes, looks round him, and is gone,
  Snatch'd off, perchance, in Life's full vigour.
Prepar'd or not, for such career,
He must before his Judge appear!

[Whilst the last Lines are repeated, the Curtain falls.]

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A public Place near Altdorf — In the back-ground on the right, the Yoke of Uri with the Scaffolds still standing, as in the third Scene of the first Act. — On the left, a View of several Hills, on all of which Signal-Fires are burning — Almost Day-break — Bells sounding from various distances.

RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, MASTER-MASON, and other Country-Folks, Men, Women, and Children.

RUODI.

Look at the Signals blazing on the Hills!

MASTER-MASON.

Hark to the Bells resounding o'er the Forest!

RUODI.

Our Foes are chas'd away.

MASTER-MASON.

The Forts are fallen.

RUODI.

And do *we* — in the Land of Uri — yet
Endure this Tyrant-Hold upon our Soil?
Shall we be latest to assert our freedom?

MASTER-MASON.

Shall the YOKE stand, which was to have enslav'd us?
No — down with it!

ALL.

Down with the YOKE, down with it!

RUODI.

Where is Bull of Uri?

BULL OF URI.

Here. What must I do?

RUODI.

Instant ascend yon Watch-tower — Wind thy Horn,
Till Glen, Steep, Thicket, catch the lengthening sound,
And Echo, startled from her farthest rocks,
On wings of air, fly with it to the Mountains,
Calling down Hundreds from their Alpine Homes!

Enter WALTER EÜRST.

Stay, stay, my Friends! Who knows, as yet, what 's done
In Schwytz and Unterwalden? Wait, at least,
Our Messenger's return.

RUODI.

Wait! — Wait for what?
The Tyrant 's dead, the Day of Freedom risen!

MASTER-MASON.

Are not yon flaming Messengers sufficient —
Yon Beacons blazing from an hundred Hills?

RUODI.

Come, all! Come, lend a hand — Men, Women, Children —
Down with the Walls! Leave no stone on another!

MASTER-MASON.

Come, Comrades, come! We built it up, and we
Know how to pull it down.

ALL.

Down, down with it!
[They begin tearing down the Building, on all sides.]

WALTER FÜRST.

They needs must take their course. I cannot stop them.

Enter MELCHTHAL and BAUMGARTEN.

What! Stands the Yoke yet, when proud Rotzberg 's fallen,
And Sarnen all in ashes?

WALTER FÜRST.

Is it you, Melchthal?
And do you bring us Freedom?—Are the Cantons
No longer subject to a foreign Foe?

MELCHTHAL [embracing him].

The Soil is cleans'd of all its Foes. Rejoice,
Old Father! At the moment we are speaking,
There 's not a Tyrant left in Switzerland.

WALTER FÜRST.

How did you gain possession of the Castles?

MELCHTHAL.

Led on by Rudenz we surpriz'd them both,
And, ere the Guards had warning of our presence,
The Walls were won, the Castles were our own.
—But I must tell you what occur'd at Sarnen.
Scarce had we clear'd it of the Enemy,
And wrapt its trembling Towers in flame and ruin,

When Diethelm, Gessler's Page, rush'd crying to us—
The Lady Brunek was within the Castle—

WALTER FÜRST.

Good God! [Beams of the Scaffold heard falling].

MELCHTHAL.

'T was She herself, the Lady Bertha,
Who 'd been secreted there by Gessler's orders.
—Despairing, raving, Rudenz flew to save her.
And now, through flame and smoke and crashing rafters,
We 'd work'd our way, half-hoping, half-despairing,
When suddenly, from out a lonely Casement,
Amidst the pauses of the fiery Storm,
That roar'd along the hollow Vaults like thunder,
A feeble Moan, a plaintive Prayer, was heard—
The Voice was Bertha's—

WALTER FÜRST.

Is She sav'd?

MELCHTHAL.

Decision
And boldest Promptitude alone could save her.
And here—had he been but our Baron, our grand Lord—
We might have thought of our own lives and safety,
And left, perhaps, the Victims to their doom;
But the brave Knight was our Confederate,
And Bertha, always, dearly lov'd our People—
So boldly on—unheeding death or danger—
We rush'd into the fiery flood to save her.

WALTER FÜRST.

And She is sav'd!

MELCHTHAL.

She is!—Rudenz and I—
Ourselves we drew her from the blazing ruin.
And now—when he perceiv'd her safe—with eyes
Uprais'd in tearful gratitude to Heaven,
The Baron press'd me to his heart, and there
Was sworn between us, in that silent moment,
A League—a Friendship—which, midst fire and toil
Cemented, shall endure all storms of human tryal.

WALTER FÜRST.

And where is Landenberg?

MELCHTHAL.

Beyond the Brünig.
It was no fault of mine, that he bore hence
The light, of which he had depriv'd my Father.
I track'd him out, o'ertook him in his flight,
And dragg'd him trembling to my Father's feet.
Already the fierce Sword flash'd over him—
'Tis only to the blind Old Man's entreaties
He stands indebted for the boon of life!
Howe'er I made him swear a solemn oath
(And he will keep it) never to return
Or taint these Cantons with his presence more.

WALTER FÜRST.

Thank God! our Victory 's unstain'd with blood.

[Horn of Uri heard from without—Children seen running across the stage with fragments of scaffolding and shouting "Liberty! Liberty!"—]

WALTER FÜRST.

Look, what a Holiday! Those little Children
Will not forget it to their latest hour.

[Girls carrying about the Hat on a Pole—The Stage filled with People.]

RUODI.

Here is the Hat, which we were to bow down to.

BAUMGARTEN.

What 's to be done with it?

WALTER FÜRST.

Heavens! beneath this Hat
Stood mine own Grandchild!

SEVERAL VOICES.

Into the fire with it!
Destroy the base memorial of our Bondage.

WALTER FÜRST.

No — let 's preserve it. Hitherto 't hath been
An Instrument of Tyranny; henceforth
It shall be the Memorial of our Freedom.

[Country-People — Men, Women and Children — some standing, and others sitting on the beams of the broken Scaffolding — all picturesquely grouped in a Semicircle.]

MELCHTHAL.

Thus stand we on the wrecks of Tyranny;
And nobly, brave Confederates! most nobly
Have we redeem'd the pledge we gave at Rütli.

WALTER FÜRST.

The work 's indeed begun, but not accomplish'd;
We still have need of courage and firm concord,
For, be assur'd, the King will not be slow
To avenge the death of Gessler, and bring back
The exil'd Landenberg once more upon us.

MELCHTHAL.

Pour the full tide of Austria's vengeance on us,

And we will stem it! All is peace at home,
And who regards their thunders from without?

RUODI.

The Passes leading to the Land are few,
And to pass them, they must pass o'er our bodies.

BAUMGARTEN.

We are a Brotherly, united Band,
And fear no Hosts, that Man can bring against us.

Enter RÖSSELMANN and STAUFFACHER.

RÖSSELMANN [in entering].

Such are Heaven's dreadful judgements.

COUNTRY-PEOPLE.

What 's the matter?

RÖSSELMANN.

In what times do we live!

WALTER FÜRST.

What is it?—Hah,
Are you here, Werner? What brings you amongst us?

COUNTRY-PEOPLE.

What is it? What has happen'd?

RÖSSELMANN.

List and wonder!

STAUFFACHER.

From one great dread at least are we deliver'd.

RÖSSELMANN.

The Emperor is murder'd.

WALTER FÜRST.

Gracious God!

COUNTRY-PEOPLE [pressing round Stauffacher].

The Emperor murder'd! What! The Cæsar murder'd!

MELCHTHAL.

Impossible! From whence came the Report?

STAUFFACHER.

'Tis true. Near Bruck, by an Assassin's hand
Has Albert fallen; a trust-worthy Man,
JOHN MÜLLER, brought the tidings from Schaffhausen.

WALTER FÜRST.

Who is the Author of the monstrous deed?

STAUFFACHER.

That aggravates the Crime. The Perpetrator
Was his own Nephew, his own Brother's Child;
The Grand-Duke JOHN OF SUABIA, he has done it.

MELCHTHAL.

What urg'd him to so damn'd a parricide?

STAUFFACHER.

The Cæsar had from the impatient Youth
Witholden his paternal Heritage;
'Tis said, he meant to cut off altogether
The Nephew from his rights, bestowing on him
A Bishoprick, in lieu of his Domains.
Be that, however, as it may — the Youth
Too readily lent ear to evil Counsellors,
And with the noble Lords of Eschenbach,
Wart, Balm, and Tegerfeld, resolv'd — as he

Could not get satisfaction for his rights—
To take, at least, full vengeance of his wrongs.

WALTER FÜRST.

But say, how was the dreadful Deed accomplish'd?

STAUFFACHER.

The King was passing down from Stein to Baden,
On, towards Rheinfeld, where the Court resides,
Attended by the Princes JOHN and LEOPOLD,
And an illustrious Train of high-born Nobles.
But, when he reach'd the Ferry of the Reuss,
The Assassins press'd themselves into the Boat
So as to separate him from his Followers.—
Thence onward as, through a plough'd Field, the Prince
Was riding—an old Town, from Heathen Times
Renown'd, lying just below—and Habsburg's Towers,
The Cradle of his noble Race, in sight—
Duke JOHN drove deep a Dagger in his neck,
Balm pierc'd him with his Lance, and Eschenbach
Clove through his Skull, that down he sank in blood,
Murder'd, on his own Soil, by his own People.
His faithful Friends, who, from the adverse shore,
Beheld the bloody deed, could only raise
Their unavailing cries of rage and woe;
But a poor Woman chanc'd to pass the way,
And in her lap the Cæsar bled to death.

MELCHTHAL.

Thus has he only dug his early grave,
Who would, insatiable, have swallowed all.

STAUFFACHER.

A monstrous terror reigns throughout the Land;
The Passes of the Mountains all are clos'd;

Each Canton guards its Frontiers; ancient Zürich
Bars fast her Gates, which had for thirty years
Stood open,—fearful of the Assassins,
And still more of th' Avengers.—Arm'd meanwhile
With her Bann, comes the Queen of Hungary,
The severe Agnes,—She, who never knew
The mildness of her Sex,—She comes to avenge
Her Father's blood upon the Murderers,
Upon the Murderers and their whole Race,
Their Servants, Children, Children's Children, yea
On the very Walls and Pavements of their Castles.
She swears to offer up whole Generations,
In sacrifice, at her slain Father's tomb,
And bathe herself in blood as in May-dew.

MELCHTHAL.

Is it known where the Murderers have fled?

STAUFFACHER.

No sooner had the Wretches executed
Their barbarous deed than, fleeing different ways,
They parted ne'er to see each other more.—
The Duke, they say, is wandering in the Mountains.

WALTER FÜRST.

Thus, for the Perpetrators, the Crime bears
No fruit! Revenge bears *them* no fruit! She is
Herself her own detested nutriment;
Murder 's her joy, and horror her satiety.

STAUFFACHER.

'Tis as it should be; to the Murderers
Their Crime brings no reward; while we, the Innocent,
We, with pure hands, may gather the glad fruit
And ample harvest of the bloody deed.

We are deliver'd from our greatest dread;
Our Freedom's greatest Enemy is fallen;
And — if Report says true — the Crown will pass
From Habsburg's House into another Family;
The Electors of the Empire being resolv'd
To vindicate their just prerogative,
And ancient privilege, of free Election.

WALTER FÜRST AND OTHERS.

Who' is named for it?

STAUFFACHER.

The Count of Luxemburg
Is by most voices mention'd —

WALTER FÜRST.

It is well
For us, that we stood faithful to the Empire;
Now may our Cantons hope, at least, for Justice.

STAUFFACHER.

Each may assist the other. The new Emperor
Will be requiring Friends around his throne;
And we, Allies against the rage of Austria.

[The Country-People are seen congratulating and embracing each other.]

Enter THE SACRIST with a MESSENGER of the EMPIRE.

SACRIST.

Here are the Chiefs and Elders of the Land.

RÖSSELMANN AND OTHERS.

What is the matter now?

SACRIST.

A Messenger
Of the Empire brings a letter for the Cantons.

ALL [to Walter Fürst].

and read it.

WALTER FÜRST [reading].

"To our faithful Subjects
Jri, Schwytz, and Unterwald, the Queen
ls grace —

SEVERAL VOICES.

What means the Queen? Her Reign is over.

WALTER FÜRST [reads on].

ıer deep grief and pain of Widowhood,
ɔrein the bloody Murder of her Lord
plac'd the Queen, Her Majesty remembers
ancient faith and love of Switzerland."

MELCHTHAL.

ɔr prosperity she never did so.

RÖSSELMANN.

.! hear!

WALTER FÜRST [reading on].

"And calls upon her faithful People
manifest their righteous indignation
.inst the accursed Authors of the deed.
the three Forest States, her Majesty
:h confidence relies, that they will give
refuge to the Murderers, but rather
in delivering them to the Avenger.
s, she doubts not, they willingly will do,
nembering the love and favour, which
·m Rudolph's princely House they have receiv'd."
ns of indignation and astonishment among the Country-People.]

SEVERAL VOICES.

Favour and love!

STAUFFACHER.

Ay, from the Father, but
What love have we to boast of from the Son?
Has he confirm'd the Charters of our Freedom,
As every Cæsar, before him, had done?
Has he given righteous judgements? Has he been
A Guardian or a Friend to the Opprest?
Has he even condescended to give ear
To any of the numberless petitions,
Which our Calamities drew from us?—No!—
Not one of these things has he ever done;
And had we not, with a courageous hand,
Extorted justice at the Sabre's edge,
There 's no necessity of ours had mov'd him;
'T would have been long ere *he* had listen'd to us—
Thank him! He has sown no thanks in these Valleys.
He stood in a high place; he might have been
A Father to his People; but it pleas'd him
To think of nought save his own selfish ends,
And how he best might aggrandize his Family:
Those, whom he has befriended, may lament him.

WALTER FÜRST.

We will not triumph in the Cæsar's fall,
Nor now remember all the ill, he has done us;
Far be it from our thoughts or inclinations!
But that we should avenge the death of him,
Who never did his People any good,
And pursue those, that never did them wrong,
Is contrary to all reason and becomes not
Her Majesty to ask, or us to do.
Love must be a free offering: The King's death

lves us from all compulsory duties,
we had none beside to render him.

MELCHTHAL.

ɜ Queen weeps for anguish in her Palace,
ly accusing Heaven in her despair,
ıere may you behold a People freed
. wretchedness, and unto the same Heaven
rning pious thanks for their deliverance.—
who would reap regret, must sow affection.
[Exit Messenger].

STAUFFACHER [to the People].

where is Tell?—The Founder of our Freedom,
he alone be wanting to our triumph?
comes he not to share the common joy?
HE, that hath achiev'd the greatest deed;
HE, that hath endur'd the greatest dangers.
ı haste we to his Cot with songs of triumph,
bid the Saviour of our Country hail. [Exeunt].

SCENE II.

Entrance-Room of Tell's House — A fire is burning on ? hearth — Through the open door is seen a view of the ighbouring Country.

HEDWIGE, WALTER, and WILLIAM.

HEDWIGE.

ı, dearest Boys! Your Father comes to-day!
ives, is free, and we and all are free!
he it is—your Father—that has freed us.

WALTER.

And I was with him, Mother! I shall, too,
Be nam'd along with him. My Father's Arrow
Came whistling at my head, and yet I shrank not—
I knew He would not hurt me.

HEDWIGE.

Blessings on thee!
Twice have I borne thee! Twice have I endur'd
A Mother's pangs for thee!—But it is over—
I have you now—both, both of you—and soon
Will your dear Father come to crown our joys.

A MONK appears at the Door.

WILLIAM.

Look, Mother, look! There stands a pious Brother;
He is coming to implore our charity.

HEDWIGE.

Go, bring the poor Man in, and let him feel
That he is come into a House of Joy.
[Goes in and returns immediately with a Cup].

WILLIAM [to the Monk].

Come in, good Man; my Mother will relieve you.

WALTER.

Come in and rest yourself.

MONK [with looks of terror and anxiety].

Where am I? Where?
Quick, tell me, in what Country?

WALTER.

Have you lost
Your way, Sir, that you know not where you are?
You are at Bürglen, in the Land of Uri,
Just at the entrance of the Schächenthal.

MONK [to Hedwige who has just returned].

Are you alone? Is not your Husband here?

HEDWIGE.

I am now expecting him — but what 's your errand?
I fear you bring no good with you; but still —
Whoe'er you are — you seem in want; so take it.
[Offering him the Cup.]

MONK.

Sore as this wearied Body needs refreshment,
I will touch nothing, till you 've promis'd me —

HEDWIGE.

Touch not my clothes, approach no nearer to me —
If I must hear you, keep, at least, your distance —

MONK.

By this bright Hearth, that glows with friendly welcome,
By all the cherish'd Rights of Hospitality,
By these dear Children, whom I now embrace —
[taking hold of the Boys].

HEDWIGE.

What do you mean, Man? — Back, from my Children!
You are no Monk! You are not! Peace is wont
To dwell beneath that habit, but no peace
Is dwelling in your face.

MONK.

Alas! I am
The most forlorn and wretched of Mankind.

HEDWIGE.

Unhappiness pleads powerfully to the heart;
And yet your looks — they freeze up all my soul —

WALTER [suddenly springing up].

Mother, he is here! — My Father — [runs out].

HEDWIGE.

O my God!

[Attempts to follow, but growing faint, staggers and supports hersel against the door].

WILLIAM [running out].

Father!

WALTER [from without].

You are return'd!

WILLIAM [from without].

Father, dear Father!

TELL [from without].

Ay, here I am once more — but where' s your Mother?

WALTER [from without].

She could not get beyond the door; She is
In such a tremble, all with fear and joy.

TELL [entering with the Boys].

O Hedwige! Hedwige! Mother of my Children!
No Tyrant ever shall divide us more.

HEDWIGE [hanging on his neck].

Tell! Tell! What anguish have I suffer'd for thee!

TELL.

Forget it now, and only live to joy!
Once more I 'm here! Once more am standing with thee
On our own Hearth!

WILLIAM.

But, Father, where 's your Cross-Bow?
I see it not.

TELL.

You will not see it more.
It is suspended in a holy Place,
Nor ever will again be us'd in hunting.

HEDWIGE.

O Tell! Tell! [Drawing back and letting go his hand.]

TELL.

What alarmeth thee, dear Wife!

HEDWIGE.

How—how return'st thou to me, Tell?—That Hand
—Dare I lay hold of it?—That Hand—O God!

TELL [with tenderness and spirit].

It hath protected thee and sav'd our Country—
I dare uplift it, pure and free, to Heaven.—
[Observing the Monk.]
—Who is this Brother here?

HEDWIGE.

Ah, I 'd forgot him!
Do speak to him; I shudder at his presence.

MONK [advancing].

Art thou the Tell, who slew the Governor?

TELL.

Yes, I am he; I hide the fact from no Man.

MONK.

Thou art that Tell! Ah, it is God's own Hand
Hath brought me here beneath thy sheltering roof.

TELL [surveying him attentively].

Thou art no Monk?—Who art thou?

MONK.

Thou hast slain
The Governor, that did thee wrong—I, too,
Have slain a Foe, that had denied me justice;
He was no less *thy* Enemy than *mine*—
I 've freed the Land from his oppressions.

TELL [starting back].

Thou—
O horror! Children! Children, in—Dear Wife,
Hence instantly! Go! Go!—Unhappy Man,
Thou art—

HEDWIGE.

Good God, who is he?

TELL.

Ask me not!
Away! Away! The Children must not hear it.
Out of the House—Far off—Thou must no tarry
Even under the same Roof with him.

HEDWIGE.

Woe's me!
What means this! Come [Exit with the Children.]

TELL [to the Monk].

Thou art the Duke of Austria—
Thou 'rt he! Thou *art* he, who has slain the Emperor,
Thine Uncle and Liege Lord.

JOHN THE PARRICIDE.

He was the Robber
Of mine Inheritance.

TELL.

To slay thine Uncle,
Thine Emperor! And does the Earth yet hold thee!
The Sun yet shine upon thee!

PARRICIDE.

Tell! Tell, hear me—
Hear me before you—

TELL.

Reeking with the blood
Of thine own murder'd Emperor and Uncle,
Can'st thou set foot within these unstain'd Walls?
Can'st thou claim hospitality, or shew
Thy guilty countenance to honest Men?

PARRICIDE.

From thee, at least, I had expected pity;
Thou, too, hast taken vengeance on a Foe.

TELL.

Wretch! Dar'st thou thus confound thy deed with mine?
The righteous indignation of a Father
With the damn'd parricide of thine Ambition?

Hast thou defended some dear Infant's head?
Guarded the sanctuary of thy Hearth? Averted
The last extremity from all thou loved'st?
—I can lift up my hands unstain'd to Heaven,
And curse thee and thy crime.—I but aveng'd
Insulted Nature's laws; thou hast profan'd them.—
Away! I share nought with thee—Thou hast murder'd,
I have protected all on Earth most dear.

PARRICIDE.

You cast me hence, all-comfortless, despairing!

TELL.

I shudder whilst I am talking with thee. Hence,
Pursue thy fearful way, nor longer taint
This Cot, the abode of peace, with thy dark presence.

PARRICIDE [turning to depart].

I cannot, will not, drag on such a being.

TELL.

And yet my Soul bleeds for thee—God of Heaven!
So young, from such a noble stem, the Grandson
Of RUDOLPH, mine old Lord and Emperor—
To see thee at a poor Man's threshold thus,
A Murderer, an Outcast, supplicating,
Despairing—[Hides his face].

PARRICIDE.

O, if thou yet can'st weep, let my sad Fate
Excite thy pity; it is horrible.
I am a Prince—at least I was one—and
I might have been most happy, had I but

Put curb on the impatience of my wishes.
But envy gnaw'd my heart—I saw my Cousin
LEOPOLD enrich'd with territory, crown'd
With honours, and myself, of equal age,
Retain'd in slavish, base minority—

TELL.

Unhappy Youth, well did thy Uncle know
When he witheld thy Lands and People from thee,
Well knew he, how unfit thou wert to rule!
Thou, thou thyself, by thine own desperate conduct,
Hast amply justified his wise resolve.
—Where are the bloody Partners of thy guilt?

PARRICIDE.

Gone where their fear or chance of safety drives them;
I have not seen them since the fatal day.

TELL.

Thou know'st, the Bann of Justice follows thee;
Thou stand'st proscrib'd alike to Friend and Foe.

PARRICIDE.

'Tis, therefore, I avoid all public ways,
And venture not to knock at any door,
But turn my steps towards the Wilderness.
A horror to myself, I roam the Mountains,
Starting at mine own shadow,—shuddering
At every Brook, that shews my hapless form—
O, if soft Pity, if Humanity,
E'er touch'd thy heart—[falling prostrate before him.]

TELL [turning away].

Stand up! Stand up!

PARRICIDE.

No; not
Until thou hast stretch'd forth thine hand to help me.

TELL.

Can I help thee? Can I, a Man of sin?—
But stand up—Horrible as thine offence—
Thou 'rt yet a Man—and so am I—and none,
That bear the name, shall go from Tell uncomforted.
What little I am able, I will do.

PARRICIDE.

[Springing up and grasping Tell's hand with vehemence].

O Tell, you save me from despair and death.

TELL.

Let go my hand—Thou must'st away. Thou can'st not
Remain here undiscover'd; can'st not, if
Discover'd, count on safety—Whither then
Wouldst thou direct thy course? Where hopest thou
To find repose?

PARRICIDE.

Alas! I know not.

TELL.

Hear then,
What Heaven suggesteth to my heart—Thou must'st
Away to Italy—to St. Peter's City!—
There, prostrate at the Holy Father's feet,
Confess thy guilt, and loose thy burden'd Soul.

PARRICIDE.

Will he not give me up to the Avenger?

TELL.

Whate'er he does, receive it as from God.

PARRICIDE.

Alas! How shall I reach that unknown Land?
How guide mine unacquainted feet? I dare not
Associate myself with other Travellers.

TELL.

I will point out your way. Attend!—You first
Ascend from hence along the River Reuss,
Which, with wild course, comes rushing from the Mountains—

PARRICIDE [shuddering].

The Reuss—Great God!—'t was Witness of the deed.

TELL.

Your Road lies through the deep Ravine, and many
A Cross erected near—in memory
Of Travellers, whom the Avalanches have,
From time to time, o'erwhelm'd—will serve to shew it.

PARRICIDE.

Of Nature and her horrors I 'd reck nothing,
Could I but quell the pangs of this wild heart.

TELL.

Fall down before each Cross; with contrite tears
Confess thy guilt, and pray to God for mercy;
And—shouldst thou scape the perils of the way,
Should not the Mountain from its icy ridge
Send down its thundering Avalanches on thee—
Thou'lt reach the Drizzling Bridge; thence—if the Arch
Sink not beneath thy guilt, if happ'ly thou
Pass over it—from thence thou wilt arrive at

The Rocky-Gate, that gloomy Pass, where Day
Hath never shone—there enter, and 't will bring thee
Into a smiling Vale—but onward quick;
'Tis not for thee to rest in scenes of joy.

PARRICIDE.

O Rudolph! Rudolph! Kingly Ancestor!
Is it thus thy Grandson enters thine own Kingdom?

TELL.

Thus, still ascending, thou wilt reach, at length,
The Gotthardt's heights, where everlasting Lakes,
Fill'd from Heaven's founts, supply the streams below.
There, take thy farewell look of Germany:
Another River, issuing thence, will guide
Thee into Italy, thy Land of promise—
[The Kuhreihen, sounded on Alpine Horns, is heard from without.]
What sounds are those? Away!

HEDWIGE [entering in haste].

My Father 's coming;
And with him the Confederates in procession—

PARRICIDE.

Woe 's me! I dare not tarry with the happy.

TELL.

Go, dearest Wife. Refresh this Man; supply him
Amply with all things needful; for his way
Is long, and he will find no Guest-house near.
Quick! They 're approaching.

HEDWIGE.

Who is he?

TELL.

Inquire not!
And when he leaves you, turn away your eyes,
So as not to see the road, which he pursues.

[The Parricide hastily aproaches Tell; but the latter, motioning to him with hand, retires.]

SCENE THE LAST.

The outside of Tell's House — The whole Valley before, as well as the Heights around it, covered with People — Others are seen.coming in procession over the Bridge of the Schächen — Stauffacher, Melchthal, and Walter Fürst leading his two Grandchildren, come forwards, others pressing after them — Tell, coming out of his House, is welcomed by all with the loudest acclamations of gratitude and joy.

ALL.

Long life to Tell! Long life to our Deliverer!

[Whilst the foremost press round and embrace Tell, Rudenz and Bertha appear, the former conversing with the Country-People, the latter congratulating Hedwige. — Music from the Hills.]

BERTHA [coming forwards].

Confederates! Friends! Admit me to your League;
The First, that has found refuge in this Land
Of Freedom. In your hands I place my Rights.
Will you protect me as your Fellow-Citizen?

PEOPLE.

Ay, that we will! — With hand and heart we 'll guard thee! —

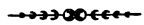
BERTHA [turning towards Rudenz].

Well then! to this brave Youth I give my hand,
A free Swiss-Maiden to a free Swiss-Man!

RUDENZ.

And I declare my Serfs and Vassals free.

[The Curtain falls amidst Music and shouts of Triumph.]



APPENDIX.

1) *Stern Mytenstein*, *p. 5.* — A steep Rock, standing on the North of Rütli, and nearly opposite to Brunnen. From all appearances it must have been, in former ages, of considerable height, and probably formed a part of the neighbouring Cliff.

2) *The Weatherloch*, *p. 5.* — Wetterloch — a narrow Hold or Hollow in the Mountains, from which the Wind is said to blow violently on the approach of a Thunder-Storm.

3) *She 'd starve*, *p. 6.* — The Senn or Cow-Keeper suspends Bells of different sizes on the necks of his Cows in proportion to their respective merits; and it is said that these Animals are so susceptive of feelings similar to our own, that if the leading Cow fall into disgrace and be deprived of her honours, she exhibits all the mortification of wounded pride and of angry jealousy at the promotion of a Rival; and the question of precedence excites as much bitterness in the pastures of the Alps, as it can do in the Drawing-Rooms of the Tuilleries or St. JAMES'S — *Diary of an Invalid.* — The Cows in many parts of the Country — in the Cantons of Vaud, Fribourg, and, more especially, Schwytz — are amongst the bestformed and most beautiful Creatures of their kind that I have ever seen. On the road from the Gotthardt I met several large Herds, which were going into Italy and had been purchased at high prices. One of them, reared in the pastures of Einsiedeln, had brought to the venerable Proprietors of that District as much as from 14 to 22 Louis a head.

4) *Witness our Chamois*, *p. 6.* — The Chamois a most timid Animal and consequently always on the watch against danger. They move in flocks and, when feeding, station one of their number, as a Sentinel on some neighbouring height, from whence he gives instant notice to his fellows on the approach of an Enemy. See *Coxe's Switzerland Vol. I.*, *Letter 29; and Picot's Statistique de la Suisse*, *p. 48.*

5) *The Alp is eaten bare*, *p. 6.* — The word "Alp" here means a Mountain-pasture. Nothing is sweeter or more delicate than its Grasses, which constitute the chief wealth of the neighbouring Inhabitants. As the Snows disappear, the Flocks and Herds gradually ascend the Mountains, following the productions of the Spring, which rise to life under their feet from day to day, untill the Snows of Autumn compel them to retire again into the Vallies. — See *Picot*, *p. 24; and Joh. Bapt. Plantini Helv. antiqua et nova*, *C. VI.*

6) *Wolfenschiessen*, *p. 7.* — A young Man of noble Family, and native of Unterwalden, who had been induced by the influence of Austria to abandon his Friends, Country and Freedom and to become Bailiff or Governor of Rotzberg. Having, among other enormities, assailed the honour of Baumgarten's Wife, he had his brains dashed out by the indignant Husband. See *Tschudi Chron. Helvet. I.*, *p. 233.* — *Etterlin*, *p. 25.*— *Müller's Hist. of the Swiss Confederacy I.*, *C. 18.*

7) *The South-wind's up*, *p. 9.* — The Föhn or South-wind is often so violent as to prevent Boatmen from navigating the Lake of the Four Cantons. During its prevalence the Watchmen in the Towns are doubled and the Fires in the Houses extinguished. [Some Writers say that there was an ancient Law to this effect.]—In the higher Valleys the People are accustomed to load the roofs of their Cottages and other Buildings with heavy stones to prevent the coverings from being swept away by its violence. "Eo furore spirat, ut tecta ædibus auferat integra. Nemo interea excitat ignem, quia fumis nullum permittit egressum," *Frey*, *C. IX.* — and see

Müller's Hist. I., C. 18, note 227.—Another Writer (Author of the "Description Historique, Géographique, et Physique de la Suisse") speaking of this Wind has observed, that, it produces the most singular phænonema. In Winter it always softens the temperature of the Atmosphere. In Spring it will often, in the course of a Night, develop the long-lost vegetation, cover the Woods and Meadows with verdure, and enamel the Rocks with Flowers, melting the Snows on the tops and sides of the Mountains, and filling the Gulphs and Valleys below with vapour and foam. In the Summer, the effects are of a different nature. An overwhelming Heat spreads along the Valley of the Reuss, and its Inhabitants — more particularly those who dwell in the lower parts, or who are of a weak and sickly constitution — suffer from head-aches, giddiness, and moral and physical dejection.

8) *Tell of Bürglen, p. 10.* — Bürglen, the Birth-place and Residence of Tell, lies at the entrance of the Schächenthal, and not half an hour's walk from Altdorf. A Chapel, erected in 1522, remains on the spot where his House previously stood.

9) *Stauffacher, p. 14.* — Werner Stauffacher was a Gentleman of good family and fortune, whose Father had been Landamman or Chief Magistrate of Schwytz. He is described by Historians as a Man of popular manners and character, and not more respected for his Father's virtues than for his own. Having been insulted by Gessler, and threatened with the loss of his Land and Liberty, he was induced by his Wife, a Woman of high spirit and masculine understanding, to anticipate the blow and to deliberate with his Friends on plans for the deliverance of their Country. — See *Etterlin's Kron. p. 26.*— *Tschudii Chron. I., p. 235.* — *Müller, I., C. 18.* — The site of Stauffacher's House at Steinen is now occupied by a Chapel, built in 1400 and containing (like Tell's Chapels) rude Frescos, representative of the principal Events of that period. — He seems to have lived to a good old age, serving his Country and the Cause of Liberty on various occasions, more especially

at the battles of Morgarten and Laupen in 1315, and 1339. — The last of the Family (as I learned in the neighbourhood) was a Female, who died about 30 years ago.

10) *Swear not allegiance to the House of Austria, p. 14.* — It is necessary, throughout this Drama, to distinguish between the *Empire* and *Austria*, though they both happened to have been at that time, under the same Sovereign. The Swiss were as anxious to continue Members of the former, as they were averse from being handed down, like Heir-Looms, to the latter.

11) *Walter Fürst, p. 20.* — Walter Fürst (Tell's Father-in-law, and one of the three Chiefs of the Confederacy) is described by Historians as a wealthy Countryman — "Ein reicher Landmann." — He resided in the Village of Attinghausen, adjoining the Castle of that name, and on the right of the Road leading along the banks of the River Reuss, to Mount St. Gotthardt. His Family has been long extinct. See *Müller's Hist. I., c. 18; — Leu's Helvet. Lexicon.*

12) *The Banneret of Attinghausen, p. 20.* — Werner, Baron of Attinghausen, Landamman and Banneret of Uri — a Man (says Müller) "who, by the dignity of his ancient and unstained nobility, his advanced age, his experience in business, his vast and honourably acquired possessions and his unaffected love for his native Land," — had obtained an influence over the People, unrivalled by any of his noble Equals. — He always disapproved of the arbitrary Measures of the Emperor — spoke freely against them in the Landsgemeinde — and had been often heard to declare, that it was impossible for the three Cantons much longer to endure them. *Müller I., p. 497.*

13) *The Yoke of Uri, p. 22.* — "Zwing Uri" — "Uriæ Jugum" — the name given to a Fortress which Gessler was building at Altdorf for the subjection of the People. *Tschudi I., p. 235; — Simler p. 18.*

14) *Arnold of Melchthal, p. 28; — Henry of the Halden, p. 32.* — Arnold or Erni vom Melchthal was a near Relation of Walter Fürst's. His proper name seems to have been *an der*

Halden, that of Melchthal being the name not of the Family from which he sprung, but of the place where he resided. — Henry an der Halden, his Father, was a respectable Landholder in the Valley of the Melch. He is represented in History, as a benevolent, upright and judicious Man—loved and venerated by all his Neighbours — and ever ready to stand up for the liberties of his Country and the rights of the Oppressed. *Etterlin Kron. p. 25;—Tschudi, I., p. 234;—Simleri Resp. Helvet. 12; Müller, I., c. 18, p. 640, 648, etc.*—The respectable Priest of the Parish, M. Stöckmann, who resides within a quarter of a Mile of the spot, on which the House of the Melchthals stood, informed me that several of their name and family were still in existence. — The Field, which Tradition points out as the place, where the Governor's Messenger seized the Oxen, telling their Owner, that, "if Peasants wished to eat bread, they might draw the plough themselves" — is almost immediately in front of the Church and Parsonage House. The Melchthal (or Valley of the Melch) is about 3 leagues in length, extending from the neighbourhood of Kerns to the Oberland of Bern. The Population of the Valley is about 200, and has scarcely increased or decreased (as I was assured by the Clergyman) for the last 150 years.

15) *Landenberger's arm, p. 30.* — Berenger von Landenberg — a Man of noble Family in Thurgau, and Bailiff or Governor of Unterwalden — who brought disgrace on the name of the one, and on the dignity of the other, by his cruelties to the Swiss, and particularly to the venerable Henry of the Halden. — He was slain at the battle of Morgarten in 1315. *Tschudi, I., p. 231, 234;—Müller, I., c. 18, and II., c. 1.*

16) *No Traitor dwells in Unterwalden, p. 39.* — During the iniquitous invasion of the French in 1798, it was the boast of this heroic People, that The Enemy could not find amongst them either a Spy or a Mistress!

17) *The Rütli, p. 40.* — Rütli or Grütli — a steep Meadow in a solitude on the shore of the Forest-Lake, not far from

the Confines of Uri and Unterwalden, and almost opposite to Brunnen in Schwytz. The word signifies Novale or newly-broken ground—ground, where the Wood has been stubbed or rooted out. "Wo Gestrüpp oder Waldung ausgereutet worden." See *Müller, I., C. 18, Note 219.*—In the Holy-House ("das Heilige Haus," as it is called) are three springs, which popular Superstition believes to have burst forth from the Earth immediately after the oath of Confederation had been taken, and to mark the precise spots where its three principal Heroes stood.

"Who would not climb to drink
"Of the three hallowed Fountains?—He, that does,
"Comes back the better."—ROGERS.

18) *The Peasant Nobless, p. 44.* — The oldest and most respected Families of the Forest States were designated by the Austrians and their Faction with this appelation.—"Die alten langverehrten Geschlechter nannten sie Bauernadel." *Müller, I., p. 640.*

19) *While sounding on some distant shore, p. 45.* — The effect of the Kuhreihen or Ranz des Vaches on Swiss Regiments, when at a distance from home, is spoken of by many Writers, and furnishes a striking illustration of the peculiar power of a perception, or of an impression on the Senses to awaken assiociated thoughts and feelings. See *Stewart's Philosophy of the Human Mind, Vol. I., c. V., part 1.*—Cet air étoit si cheri des Suisses" (says Rousseau in his Dict. of Music) "qu'il fut defendu, sous peine de mort, de le jouer dans leurs Troupes, parcequ'il faisoit fondre en larmes, déserter, ou mourir ceux qui l'entendoient, tant il excitoit en eux l'ardent désir de revoir leur Pays. On chercheroit en vain dans cet air les actions énergiques, capable de produire de si étonnans effets. Ces effets, qui n'ont aucun lieu sur les étrangers, ne viennent que de l'habitude des souvenirs, de mille circonstances, qui, retracées par cet air à ceux qui l'entendent, et leur rappellant leur Pays, leurs anciens plaisirs, leur jeunesse, et toutes leurs façons de vivre, excitent en eux une douleur

amère d'avoir perdu tout cela. La musique alors n'agit point précisément comme *Musique*, mais comme *un Signe commemoratif*. Cet air, quoique toujours le même, ne produit aujourd'hui les mêmes effets, qu'il produisoit ci-devant sur les Suisses; parcequ'ayant perdu le goût de leur première simplicité, ils ne la regrettent plus quand on la leur rapelle. Tant il est vrai, que ce n'est pas dans leur action physique qu'il faut chercher les plus grands effets des sons sur le cœur humain."—*

Rogers has beautifully alluded to the subject in his Pleasures of Memory.

Th' intrepid Swiss, that guards a foreign shore,
Condemn'd to climb his Mountain-Cliffs no more,
If, chance, he hears the Song, so sweetly wild,
Which, on those Cliffs, his infant hours beguil'd,
Melts at the long-lost Scenes, that round him rise,
And sinks a Martyr to repentant sighs.

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I will acknowledge that I was, for a long time, a Sceptic in regard to the miraculous effects attributed to the Kuhreihen. Since, however, I became acquainted with Switzerland—more particularly with the Bernese Oberland and the Forest Cantons—since I wandered over that glorious Country (worthy of being—as I trust it ever ~~with~~ be—the abode of Patriotism and Freedom), recalling its past ages—identifying myself, as it were, with its Scenery and Associations, its still-verdant beauties and never-dying history and renown.—I have ceased to wonder at any thing that has been said or written on the subject. Heard amidst the wild Alps or echoing Glens of the ancient Fatherland (more especially when the Voice is accompanied by the Alpine Horn)—there is no melody that I know—with the exception, perhaps, of Miss Stephens's "Auld Robin Gray"—more powerfully affecting.

* There are many Variations of This Melody in the Alps, each peculiar to its own particular Valley.

20) *My Helm and Shield, p. 45.* — It was a custom, when the last Male of a noble House died, to bury his Sword, Helm and Shield with him.

21) *I 've seen them bleed at Favenz, p. 47.* — Favenz in Italy, — where, under FREDERICK II, in 1240, the Swiss so preeminently distinguished themselves in the War against the Guelphs. *Tschudii Chron. I., p. 134; Müller, I., p. 497.*

22) *The Switzer cleaves to his accustom'd Freedom, p. 53.*— The People of the Forest Cantons (says Müller) were distinguished from those of the Cities and Regions to which they have given their name by a peculiar enthusiasm for their ancient Rights and Freedom.... They gloried in the principles which had been bequeathed to them by their Fathers, and any Stranger opposing these principles, became, at once an object of their suspicion. All novelty they hated; their thoughts and feelings were like their lives, which flowed on from day to day, from year to year, in one uniform and unbroken tenour. *Hist. of the Confederation Vol. I., c. 15 and 18.*—All such principles, however, are subject to abuse, and even Switzerland, I fear, furnishes no exception to the general rule.

23) *In Hospitality's kind Laws secure, p. 53.* — Amongst a People, whose manners are simple, Hospitality is a Virtue of the first order. The duty was considered so necessary in the Middle Ages, that it was, in many Countries, even enforced by Statute. See *Laws on the subject collected by J. F. Polac, Systema Jurisprudentiæ Germanicæ p. 75; Joh. Magnus L. IV, c. 2; Simler L. II, 130 etc.* Even now in those parts of the Forest Cantons, where there are no Inns, the Minister of the Parish is required to entertain Strangers.

24) *It was a Winkelried that slew the Dragon, p. 55.* — This Gentleman had been obliged to leave his Country for Manslaughter. — After having distinguished himself in the service of the Empire — particularly in 1240, at Favenz, where he received the honour of Knighthood from the Emperor FREDERICK — he returned to Unterwalden, slew an enormous

Serpent which infested the country between the Kernwald and Stanz, but died, soon after, of the wounds which he had received in the struggle. They pretend to point out, at this day, the Cavern inhabited by the Monster. — The Dragon or Lindworm was an immense species of Serpent formerly known in some parts of Switzerland, but now extinct, at least in that Country. *Tschudii Chron. I., 146; Etterlin's Kron. 12.*

25) *With Snow, Floods, Mountains, round us, etc., p. 57.*

Præsentiorem et conspicimus Deum
Per invias rupes, fera per juga,
Clivosque præruptos, sonantes
Inter aquas Nemorumque noctem,
Quam si repostus sub trabe citreâ,
Fulgeret auro et Phidiacâ manu. — *Gray.*

26) *Hear what our ancient Herdsmen have narrated, p. 60.* — From the remotest times (says Müller) the following Tradition had been, generation after generation, transmitted by Father to Son.—"There was an ancient Kingdom in the North "Country — in the Country of Sweden and Friesland — which "was surprized by Famine. In their distress the Community "assembled and resolved by a Majority of Voices that a tenth "part of the People should leave the Country. Every one, on "whom the Lot * fell, was to submit to this Law. Thus went "forth our Forefathers out of the North-Country,—Friends "quitting Friends and Kindred, and Mothers leading forth "their Infants — with loud lamentations. They marched, in "three parties, under three Chiefs, ** — six thousand Men of "War — tall as Giants — with Wives and Children and House-"hold Goods. They swore never to forsake one another. They "became rich in moveable property, rich by their own victo-"rious arms, when they defeated, on the shores of the Rhine,

* This was not unusual in ancient times. See Dion. Hal. Archæol. L. I.

** Suiter, Swey, and Hasius. Bonstetten, Chron. Helv. 1481, and Song of West Friesland. — In old Charters the People of Schwytz are called "Suites."

"Count PETER OF FRANCONIA, who had opposed their passage, "and they prayed to God for a Land like that of their Fathers, "where they might pasture their Cattle in peace, without fear "of Evil Pover. * Then they were led by God into the Land "of the Brochenburg, where they built Schwytz. The People "increased so fast, that there was no longer room enough for "them in the Valley. They were not, however, dismayed at "the difficulty, but went on rooting up their Forests. **—Part "of them went into the Country of the Black Mountain, *** as "far as Weissland. † The old Folks, in the Valleys of the "Oberland, still record how, in past ages, the People went "from Mountain to Mountain, from Valley to Valley, — to "Frutigen, Obersibenthal, Afflentsch, and Jaun. †† — On the "other side of Jaun dwelt another Race."

When one compares these traditions with what is considered as authentic History; when one makes the deductions and allowances due to a long series of generations and the unlearned simplicity of earlier Times, enough remains to shew that, "the Genuine Race of the Swiss may be recognized from Schwytz across the Mountains as far as the County of Gruyeres." *Müller's Hist. of the Swiss Confed. Vol. I. c. 15.*

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* An ancient Protocol of Schwytz began in this way.

** "Si hatten mengen schweren tag,
"E inn das Land ein nutzen gab;
"Reut hauen war ir geigen bogen, &c."

They had full many a weary day,
Before their toils they could repay;

The Tune was still—Root, root away! "Song of West Friesland."

*** Brünig (in high German, Braunek, the dark or brown Corner) rising between the Lakes of Lungern and Brientz, and forming the Southern Boundary of Obwalden.

† Oberhasli, at the foot of the Glaciers, bears also the name of Hasli in the White Country.

†† High Valleys, on the confines of the Cantons of Bern and Vaud. The French name of the Valley of Jaun, is Bellegarde.

27) *Where — behind everlasting snows entrench'd*
Another People spoke another Tongue, *p. 60.*

"Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, the high Valleys below the sources of the Rhine lay yet uninhabited. At that time, according to Tradition, some Italien Fugitives first sought there an Asylum. A powerful and warlike People the Gauls, had penetrated into Italy and slaughtered or expelled the greater part of its Inhabitants from their hereditary abodes. Trembling before the hostile Sword, numbers fled from the maritime Country of the Rasennes — where in our days flourish the Cities of Florence and Genoa — and, with their Wives, Children, and Household-Gods, found a refuge in the narrow passes and deserts of the High-Alps. Here they fixed their abodes, in solitary Valleys, amidst forests and cloud-encircled Mountains, secure from the fury of the Gauls. From the name of their God or Hero, Rhætus, they were called Rhætians; and the Country which surrounds the sources of the Rhine and the Inn — the impregnable Home of the free Grisons—still bears the name of Rhætia." *Zschokke's Switzerl. c. I;* and see *Liv. L. V. c. 33; Plin. L. III c. 20; Justin. L. XX c. 5; XXIV, c. 4; Flor. L. I c. 13; Aurel. Vict. de Viris illustr. c. 23; Simler I p. 89;* &c.—"The Rhætians" (says Müller L. I c. 5) "have, for 2,500 years, preserved the fundamental Character of their language.—The *Ladin* of Lower Engadine, and the *Romansch*, spoken in many of their Mountain Districts, are essentially the same Language as that described in the Vth Book of Livy."—Both the *Romansch* and *Ladin* are, I believe, peculiar to the Grisons. They differ, however, so much from each other, that they may almost be taken for two distinct Languages. Each has been, more or less, corrupted by a mixture of German and Italian Words. About one half of the People speak these languages; in other parts of the Canton either the German or the Italian prevails. See *Plantini Helvet. antiq. et nov. c. XVIII.*

28) *We all remain'd in heart and blood the same,*
Distinct in both from all surrounding People, *p. 61.*

For a long time the Inhabitants of Schwytz, Uri, and Unterwalden, lived under one Government, and frequented the same Church in the Valley of the Muotta. But as their Population increased, each Valley came, by degrees, to have its own Church, Landamman, Council, and Tribunal. Nevertheless the three Communities continued to act in all affairs of importance as one State, and kept themselves so united as to pass among Strangers for the same People. *Müller's Hist. I c. 15; Zschokke c. 10* &c.

29) *The Emperor Frederick's Charter, p. 61.* — It is dated from the Siege of Favenz, Dec.r 14th A. D. MCCXL, and says (inter alia) "Sub alas nostras et Imperii (sicut tenebamini) confugiendo tanquam *Homines liberi*, qui solum ad nos et Imperium respectum debeatis habere, *sponte* nostrum et Imperii dominium elegistis." See *Tschudii Chron. I, 134, 135;* and *Müller's Hist. I, p. 497, note 314.*

30) *Chose our own Chiefs* &c. *p. 62.*—No one ever pretended to a Right of Sovereignty over these Mountains, except the Emperor and he — as we have seen — enjoyed it not in claim of conquest or inheritance, but in accord with the expressed wishes of the People, who rejoiced to find themselves under so powerful a Protector. When divisions broke out amongst them, they chose for their Arbitrator some Noble of the Empire,—usually a Count of the House of Lenzburg. Nevertheless nothing of importance was done without the deliberation and consent of the whole Community. The People named their own Landamman, Council, and Judges. Trifling Disputes were determined by seven or nine men; Causes of Honour, by double that number; more important Suits, by a yet greater number, either chosen by the Judges or sent to assist them by their respective Districts. In the Canton of Schwytz there existed (and, I believe, still exists) for petty differences a Street-Council (Gassenrath) composed of the first seven Citizens, who chanced to pass where the contending Parties had assembled. Capital Causes alone were judged by

the Bailiff or Deputy of the Empire. This was done at the express wish and instance of the People themselves, who thought that, in their little States, there was more chance of impartiality from a Stranger than from a Native, connected as the latter would probably be, either in friendship or blood, with one or other of the contending Parties. The Causes, however, were heard and judged openly and in presence of the General Assembly of the People. The Judge, too, was always a Man of distinction and independance — a Count or Baron of the Empire — having neither residence nor interest in the three Cantons, and only visiting them, when required by his Official Duties. On the extinction of the House of Lenzburg, the heads of which had generally enjoyed this honour, Rudolph, Count of Habsburg, was acknowledged — though not unaminously nor without the most solemn assurances, on his part, of fidelity and adherence to his trust — as the Bailiff or Judge of the Forest Cantons.—*Tschudii Chron. Helvet. Vol. I, p. 107; Müller Vol. I, c. 15.*

31) *The Cloister of Einsiedeln, p. 62.*— The Emperors, considering the uninhabited Mountains as unclaimed Lands and consequent parts of their Imperial Domains, were in the habit of making grants or donations of them to the Nobles and Priests. — Amongst others Henry II, ignorant possibly of the very existence of the little People of Schwytz, had enfeoffed the Convent of Einsiedeln in all the uncultivated Lands of the surrounding Hills. The Herdsmen of Schwytz, strangers to the affairs of the World, were unapprized of the grant, untill they found the Abbots Cattle grazing on the Pastures, which had passed from Generation to Generation and been enjoyed, for immemorial ages, as their own. They refused, however, to yield up the heritage of their Fathers. Quarrels, like those of old when the Patriarchs dug wells in the deserts of Gerar, arose between the two Parties. The Abbot, at length, brought his complaint before the Emperor HENRY V, who adjudged the pastures to the Prelate. The Peasants (who, in their ignorance

of Courts, had expected no such issue) did not disquiet themselves about the Emperor's judgment, but vigorously held fast their Inheritance.—For upwards of 30 years their disobedience passed unpunished, till the Emperor CONRAD III, ad the instigation of the Monks, decreed that, unless they submitted to the sentence of his Predecessor, they should be placed under the Imperial Ban. The Peasants replied that, if the Emperor, in contempt of right, could give away their Alps to unjust Monks, the protection of the Empire was worse than useless, and that, for the future, they would protect themselves!—Their Brethren of Uri and Unterwalden applauded the resolution, united with them, and ceased to obey the Empire. The Monarch was irritated and, putting them on the Ban, summoned HERRMANN, Bishop of Constance, to pronounce sentence of Excommunication against the whole People. No Bell was to be rung in their Valleys, no Sacrament to be allowed either for the Living or the Dead. But the Peasants regarded neither the Emperor nor his Excommunication. They commanded their Priests to celebrate Divine Service and banished from their Valleys all those who disobeyed. In spite of the Bishop's Anathema, their Pasturages remained fertile, their Flocks and Herds multiplied, and they continued to carry on a profitable Trade with their Neighbours of Lucerne and Zurich.

No sooner had the Emperor FREDERICK ascended the throne, than—being in want of trusty Soldiers—he sent the Count of Lenzburg to them with these friendly words: "The Emperor loves brave Men; assist us in our wars, as your Fathers have done before; and do not trouble yourselves about the Priests."—The People heard him with delight, and six hundred young Men instantly took up arms and crossed the Alps into Italy under his command, and to the assistance of his Friend, the Emperor. In vain was the Monarch excommunicated; in vain was the whole imperial House of Hohenstaufen assailed by the Princes of Germany, the Pope, and the Western Church.

Neither threats, promises, dangers, nor corrupt Example could shake the hearts of the Swiss or alienate them from the side of their gallant and respected Master. See *Tschudii Chron. Helvet. I, p. 51; Müller's Hist. I c. 15.* — The Convent of Einsiedeln (notre Dame-des-Ermites) owes its first foundation to MEINRAD, Count of Hohenzollern, who lived in the 9th Century and built a Cell in the midst of the Forests by which the Region was then overspread. It was augmented and enriched in the following age by Count EBERHARD (of an illustrious House in Suabia, and grand Provost of the Cathedral of Strasburg) and became, in process of time, one of the most wealthy and splendid Establishments in Europe. The Crowd of Pilgrims resorting thither was scarcely exceeded in number by those of Loretto. The Convent was plundered by the French Troops in 1798 and 1799, and not even the Holy Shrine of our Lady respected. The Monks, however, are said to have previously conveyed away their most precious Treasure—the true and miraculous Image — into a nook of safety in the Tyrol, from whence it has been since brought back and restored to its ancient Resting-place. Even now the number of Pilgrims resorting there is very great. I have overtaken and met hundreds of them, in a day, either going to, or returning from, the Holy Shrine.

32) — — — — — *He appeals*
To Heaven—calls down his everlasting Rights
Suspended there, &c., *p. 63.*
— — — — — — *Ἄγραπτα κ'ασφαλῆ Θεῶν*
Νόμιμα — — — — — — —
Οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κ'αχθες, 'αλλ' ἀέι ποτὲ
Ζῃ, κ'οὐδεις ὁιδεν ἐξ ὁτου 'φάνη. Soph. Antig. 454.
— — The firm, unwritten Laws of God —
Laws not enacted now or yesterday,
But co-existent with Eternity.

33) — — — — — — *The Charters,*
Which each new King was wont to ratify, p. 66.

It appears from the Chronicle of TSCHUDI and other Records, that, between the years 1298 and 1306, not less than five Deputations had been sent to the Emperor, praying for confirmations of Charters and redress of Grievances, — and all equally in vain. But ALBERT was a harsh, avaricious, tyrannical and selfish Man, caring little for the peace and integrity of an Elective Empire or its Members in opposition to the supposed interests of his hæreditary Austria—intent alone on the aggrandizement of Himself and Children, to which he blindly sacrificed Subjects, Neighbours, Friends, Relatives, and, eventually, his own life.—See *Tschudii Chron. I, 219 to 241; Müller, c. 18*, &c. And another Writer, who was a Contemporary and one of his Subjects, says of him: "Quod vitio avaritiæ nimis excessivè irretitus fuerit, et tantum lucris et rebus temporalibus inhiaverit; quod Castra, Civitates, et Oppida suorum Consanguineorum sibi usurpaverit." *Johan. Vitoduran.*

34) *The Grand Duke John, p. 66.*— Duke of Suabia, who soon afterwards assassinated his Uncle for witholding from him his Patrimony.

35) *If it can be without blood or vengeance, p. 68.*— There is nothing in all History more touching or sublime than the conduct of these excellent Men and true Patriots. Their Moderation and the absence of every thing like a spirit of selfish aggrandizement or revenge from their whole proceedings — accompanied as these were by the generous determination to hand down to Posterity, at whatever price, the liberties which they had inherited from their Fathers—have left a lesson and an example to the patriot and oppressed of all Countries and Ages.

On the night of the 17th of November, 1307 (say all the Chroniclers and Historians of these Times) WERNER STAUFFACHER of Schwytz, WALTER FÜRST of Uri, and ARNOLD AN DER HALDEN, commonly called MELCHTHAL, of Unterwalden, repaired to the Meadow of Rütli; each bringing with him ten determined Men of his own Canton—Men, to whom the Freedom of their Fatherland was every thing, and their own lives,

in comparison with it, nothing. Here, with beating hearts, and united by the perils of the Time in strictest league, these Thirty-three brave Men gave each other their brotherly hands, engaging 'to live and die for the rights of an innocent and oppressed People; to undertake and execute every thing in concert; to defend their own franchises without trespassing on those of others; to respect the property, and not to shed—further than might be necessary in selfdefence—the blood, even of their most cruel oppressors; but to put down all tyranny and unjust power, and to preserve unimpaired to Posterity the liberties which they had themselves received from their Forefathers.'—Engaging in these holy resolutions, and elevated by a consciousness that on the success of their enterprize, depended the Destiny — the happiness or misery — of Generations unborn, the three Leaders advanced into the midst of the Circle, and, with hands uplifted towards Heaven, swore in the name of that God, who had created both King and Peasant from the same common clay and with the same inalienable Rights, to be true to their Engagements and to defend their liberties, like Men.—Their thirty Comrades—each raising his right hand—took the same solemn Oath.—Having deliberated on and arranged their plan of proceeding, they then separated, quietly returning to their respective Valleys, and wintering their Flocks and Herds.—See *Tschudi I, p. 236; Simler Resp. Helvet. I p. 15—24; Müller's Hist. I, p. 18* &c.

36) *Sarnen and Rotzberg, p. 70.*—Both these Castles were surprized and won in the way here described. *Tschudi I. p. 239; Müller II, c. I*, &c.

37) *Death in a thousand forms waylays the Alpine Hunter, p. 75.*—SAUSSURE says: "La chasse au Chamois occupe encore beaucoup d'Habitants des montagnes et enlève souvent à la fleur de leur âge des Hommes précieux à leur Famille; et quand on sait comment se fait cette chasse, on s'étonne qu'un genre de vie, tout à la fois si pénible et si périlleux ait des attraits irrésistibles pour ceux qui en ont pris l'habitude.

"Le Chasseur de Chamois part ordinairement dans la nuit, pour se trouver à la pointe du jour dans les pâturages les plus élevés où le Chamois vient paître, avant que les troupeaux y arrivent. Dès qu'il peut découvrir les lieux où il espère les trouver, il en fait la revue avec sa lunette d'approche. S'il n'en voit pas, il s'avance et s'élève toujours davantage; mais s'il en voit, il tâche de monter au-dessus d'eux et de les approcher en longeant quelque ravine, ou en se coulant derrière quelque éminence ou quelque Rocher. Arrivé au point de pouvoir distinguer leurs cornes, c'est à cela qu'il juge de la distance, il appuie son fusil sur un rocher, ajuste son coup avec bien du sang-froid, et rarement il le manque. — Mais si, comme c'est le cas le plus fréquent, le vigilant animal apperçoit venir le Chasseur, il s'enfuit avec la plus grande vitesse dans les Glaciers, sur les Neiges, et sur les Rochers les plus escarpés. Il est surtout difficile de les approcher lorsqu'ils sont plusieurs ensemble. Alors l'un d'eux, pendant que les autres paissent, se tient en vedette sur la pointe de quelque rocher qui domine toutes les avenues de leur pâturage. Dès que cette sentinelle apperçoit un objet de crainte, elle pousse une espèce de sifflement, à l'ouïe duquel tous les autres Chamois accourent auprès d'elle, pour juger par eux-même de la nature et de l'objet du danger; et alors, s'ils voient que c'est une bête féroce ou un Chasseur, le plus expérimenté se met à leur tête, et ils s'enfuient tous à la file dans les lieux les plus inaccessibles.— C'est-là que commencent les fatigues du Chasseur; car alors, emporté par sa passion, il ne connoit plus de danger; il passe sur les neiges, sans se soucier des abîmes qu'elles peuvent cacher; il s'engage dans les routes les plus périlleuses, monte, s'élance de rocher en rocher, sans savoir comment il en pourra revenir. Souvent la nuit l'arrête au milieu de sa poursuite; mais il n'y renonce pas pour cela; il se flatte que la même cause arrêtera aussi les Chamois, et qu'il pourra les joindre le lendemain. Il passe donc la nuit, non pas au pied d'un arbre, comme le Chasseur de la plaine,

mais au pied d'un roc, souvent même sur les debris entassés où il n'y a pas la moindre espèce d'abri. Là, seul, sans feu, sans lumière, il tire de son sac un peu de fromage et un morceau de pain, fait tristement son frugal repas, met une pierre sous sa tête, et s'endort en rêvant à la route que peuvent avoir prise les Chamois qu'il poursuit. Mais bientôt éveillé par la fraîcheur du matin, il se lève transi de froid, mesure des yeux les précipices qu'il lui faudra franchir pour atteindre les Chamois, boit un peu d'eau-de-vie, dont il porte toujours une petite provision avec lui, et s'en va courir de nouveaux hazards. Ces Chasseurs restent quelquefois ainsi plusieurs jours de suite dans ces solitudes; et pendant ce temps là, leur famille, leurs malheureuses femmes surtout, sont livrées aux plus affreuses inquiétudes: elles n'osent pas même dormir dans la crainte de les voir paroître en songe; car c'est une opinion reçue dans le Pays, que quand un homme a péri, ou dans les glaces ou sur quelque rocher ignoré, il revient de nuit apparoître à la personne qui était la plus chère, pour lui dire où est son corps, et pour la prier de lui rendre les derniers devoirs.

"D'après ce tableau fidèle de la vie des Chasseurs de chamois peut-on comprendre que cette chasse soit l'objet d'une passion absolument insurmontable? J'ai connu un jeune homme de la Paroisse de Sixt, bien fait, d'une jolie figure, qui venoit d'épouser une femme charmante; il me disoit à moi-même:

"Mon grand-père est mort à la chasse, mon père y est "mort; je suis si persuadé que j'y mourrai, que ce sac que "vous me voyez, Monsieur, et que je porte à la chasse, je "l'appelle mon drap mortuaire; parceque je suis sûr que je "n'en aurai d'autre; et pourtant si vous m'offriez de faire ma "fortune, à condition de renoncer à la chasse au Chamois, je "n'y renoncerois pas." — J'ai fait sur les Alpes quelques courses avec cet homme; il étoit d'une adresse et d'une force étonnante; mais sa témérité étoit plus grande encore que sa force; et j'ai su que deux ans après, le pied lui avoit manqué

au bord d'un précipice, ou il avait subi la destinée à laquelle il s'étoit si bien attendu.

"Le petit nombre de ceux, qui vieillissent dans ce métier, portent sur la physionomie l'empreinte de la vie qu'ils ont menée; un air sauvage, quelque chose de hagard et de farouche les fait reconnoître au milieu d'une foule lors même qu'ils ne sont pas dans leur costume. Et c'est sans doute cette mauvaise physionomie qui fait croire à quelques Paysans superstitieux qu'ils sont Sorciers; qu'ils ont, dans ces solitudes, commerce avec le Diable; et que c'est enfin lui qui les jette dans les précipices.

"Quel est donc l'attrait de ce genre de vie? Ce n'est pas la cupidité, au moins ce n'est pas une cupidité raisonnée; car le plus beau Chamois ne vaut jamais plus de douze francs à celui qui le tue, même en en comprenant la valeur de sa chair; et à présent que leur nombre a beaucoup diminué, le tems que l'on perd communément pour en attraper un, vaut bien plus que ces douze francs. Mais ce sont ces dangers mêmes, cette alternative d'espérances et de crainte, l'agitation continuelle, que ces mouvements entretiennent dans l'âme, qui excitent le Chasseur, comme elles animent le Joueur, le Guerrier, le Navigateur, et même, jusqu'à un certain point, le Naturaliste des Alpes, dont la vie ressemble bien à quelques égards, à celle du Chasseur au Chamois." See *Voyages dans les Alpes, par H. B. de Saussure, Tome II, c. 24.*

38) — — — — — *Were I cautious and discreet,*
My name would not be Tell — — — *p. 95.*

"Wär ich witzig, so hiess ich nit der Tell." *Tschudii Vol. I, p. 238; Etterlin p. 29.* — Täll, or, as some of the Germans still say, Talle—from *Talen*, simple or childish—was not (says Sprenger) an hereditary, but an acquired, name, and probably that by which he was distinguished amongst his Companions. It is possible that the Governor might have suspected this simplicity to be assumed and thus—as the Greeks are said to have done to Ulysses—have exposed the Child in order to

ascertain the true state of the Father's mind. See *Sprenger's Edition of Etterlin's Kronika, p. 29, n. 4.*

39) *Destroy all germens of the unborn Race, p. 109.*

— — — — — — "Blow, Winds, and rage!
"Crack Nature's mould, all germens spill at once,
"That make ungrateful Man." — *King Lear.*

40) *I swang myself upon the Plat above, p. 115.* — In the year 1388 — only 34 years after Tell's death — a Chapel was erected by the Landsgemeinde of Uri, on the spot where he leaped on shore. It has been, from time to time, renewed and kept up ever since, and once a year Mass is said and a Sermon preached in it, at which the Inhabitants of the Forest Cantons attend, repairing thither in Boats and forming an aquatic Procession.—Speaking of the Scene here and at Rütli, Sir JAMES MACKINTOSH says: „The combination of what is grandest in Nature with whatever is pure and sublime in human conduct, affected me here more powerfully than in any place which I had ever seen. Perhaps neither Greece nor Rome would have had such power over me. They are dead. The present Inhabitants are a new Race, who regard, with little or no feeling, the memorials of former ages. This is, perhaps, the only place in our Globe, where Deeds of pure Virtue, ancient enough to be venerable, are consecrated by the Religion of the People, and continue to command interest and reverence. No local Superstition, so beautiful and so moral, any where exists. The Inhabitants of Thermopylæ or Marathon know no more of those famous Spots, than that they are so many feet of square Earth. England is too extensive to make Runnymede an object of national affection. In Countries of industry and wealth the stream of events sweeps away these old remembrances. The solitude of the Alps is a Sanctuary destined for the monuments of ancient Virtue. Rütli and Tell's Chapel are as much reverenced by the Alpine Peasants as Mecca by a devout Musselman."—

When I was at the Tell's plat in the Autumn of the present

year (1837), happening to have SHILLER'S "WILHELM TELL" with me, I put it into the hands of one of the Boatmen who, with animation and delight, read to his Comrades the description of the Storm and of Tell's escape, pointing out to me, as he proceeded, the "Buggisgrat," the "Teufelsmünster," the "Hakmesser," and other Rocks described in the Scene.

42) *Proud Knights and Nobles take the oath of Burghers, p. 124.*—Allured by the flourishiug state of the Towns, by the privileges attached to their Inhabitants, and by the safety to be found within their Walls, many of the less powerful Barons were beginning to leave their isolated and gloomy Castles and to become Citizens.

43) *Illustrious Bern lifts high her laurell'd head, p. 124.*—Bern had recently (1298) won the battle of Donnerbühl, which was followed a few years after (1339) by the still more glorious one of Laupen. In the first of these her gallant little Band was led by ULRICH VON ERLACH; in the latter, by his Son, RUDOLPH. This illustrious Family still flourishes in the neighbourhood of the City, which it has, for so many ages, strengthened and adorned by its valour and counsels. With the exception of the REDINGS of Schwytz, I scarcely know an existent House, that may be so justly proud of its ancestry.

44) *Bold Zurich trains her Citizens to Soldiers, p. 124.* — With no domains, except a Forest on the banks of the Sihl, beyond its walls, and with a Population scarcely exceeding 12,000, within them, Zurich aided only by the Forest Cantons and 200 men from Glaris, gallantly resisted and overcame the United Forces of the neighbouring Nobles and their powerful Ally of Austria. (1351)

45) *Freyburg, p. 124* — (or Fribourg, as it is called by the French) founded by BERTHOLD IV, Duke of Zæhringen, in 1178, had the misfortune, towards the end of the following century, to fall under the domination of the House of Austria, with which it continued till the middle of the 15th Century. Having, at length, however, escaped the Yoke, it allied itself

with Bern aud the other Confederates, aiding them in all their battles, and bearing a glorious part in the Victories of Granson, Morat, and Nancy.

46) *And many a Pass ennobled by the Tryal, p. 125.* — Morgarten, Näfels, Speicher, Am-Stoss, &c. &c. See *Haller's Darstellung der Schweizer-Schlachten von 1298 bis 1499.*

47) *With naked breast upon their serried Lances, p. 124.*— At the battle of Sempach (9th July 1386) the Austrian Phalanx, composed of the Flower and Chivalry of that Country and its allied and tributary States — all heavily armed and almost quadrupling in number the forces of its Adversaries — stood, for a long while, impenetrable and unmoved against every attack. Many, amongst the bravest, of the Confederates had fallen; the Field was flowing with Swiss blood; all seemed, at the moment, lost, when ARNOLD STRUTHAN OF WINKELRIED (a Knight of Unterwalden) rushing forward, exclaimed — „Dear and faithful Confederates, I will open you a passage; Protect my Wife and Children" — and then precipitated himself on the Enemy's Array grasping and burying, as many of their lances as he could reach, within his bosom, and bearing them with the weight of his body to the ground. The Confederates rushed forward through the gap which had been thus opened to them, carrying terror and destruction into the Austrian ranks, who — after a desperate but ineffectual struggle — abandoned the Field, all-strewed with their Dead and Dying, with their gallant, though haughty Arch-Duke, and his noblest Cavaliers and bravest Soldiers. More than 2500 fell on the side of Austria, amongst whom were 600 of her Counts, Barons, and most distinguished Knights. Of the Confederates (whose united Forces did not exceed 1400 men) about 200 were slain. See *Müller, Vol. II, c. 6; Zschokke, c. 17; Haller's Schweizer-Schlachten*, &c. The Field, where the Battle was fought, is on a rising ground behind the Town of Sempach and is marked by a Chapel, on the walls of which, represented in rude fresco, are the Banners, Armorial

Bearings, and Names of the Austrian Nobles and Swiss Confederates, who perished on that bloody Day.

48) *He is fetching home his Wife from Imensee*, *p. 132.*—M. Benj. Constant, in his "Reflexions sur le Théâtre Allemand"—observes: — "Si les Allemands ont rejeté l'introduction des Chœurs dans leurs Tragédies, celle d'une quantité de Personnages subalternes, qui arrivent d'une manière naturelle, bien qu'accidentale, sur la scène, remplace à beaucoup d'égards l'usage des Chœurs. — Pour nous en convaincre, il ne faut qu'examiner ce qu'a fait Schiller dans son Guillaume Tell, et rechercher ce qu'aurait fait un Poëte Grec, traitant la même situation. Tell, échappé aux poursuites de Gessler a gravi la cîme d'un rocher sauvage, qui domine sur une route, par laquelle Gessler doit passer. Le paysan Suisse attend son Ennemi, tenant en main l'arc et les flèches, qui, après avoir servi l'amour paternel, doivent maintenant servir la vengeance. Il se retrace, dans un monologue, la tranquilité et l'innocence de sa vie précédente. Il s'étonne lui-même de se voir jeté tout-à-coup par la tyrannie hors de l'existence obscure et paisible, que le sort semblait lui avoir destinée. Il recule devant l'action qu'il se trouve forcé de commettre. Ses Mains, encore pures, frémissent d'avoir à se rougir même du sang d'un Coupable. Il le faut cependant, il le faut pour sauver sa vie, celle de son Fils, celle de tous les objets de son affection. Nul doute que, dans une Tragédie Grecque, le Chœur n'eut alors pris la parole, pour réduire en maximes les sentimens qui se pressent en foule dans l'âme du Spectateur. Schiller, n'ayant pas cette ressource, y supplée par l'arrivée d'une Noce champêtre, qui passe au son des Instrumens, près des lieux où Tell est caché. Le contraste de la gaîté de cette Troupe joyeuse et de la situation de Guillaume Tell, suggère à l'instant au Spectateur toutes les réflexions que le Chœur aurait exprimées. Tell est de la même classe que ces Hommes, qui marchent ainsi dans l'insouciance. Il est pauvre, inconnu, laborieux, innocent comme eux. Comme eux,

il paraissait n'avoir rien à craindre d'un pouvoir élevé si fort au-dessus de lui: et son obscurité, pourtant, ne lui a pas servi d'asile. Le Chœur des Grecs eût développé cette vérité dans un language sententieux et poétique. La Tragédie Allemande la fait ressortir avec non moins de force par l'apparition d'une Troupe de Personnages étrangers à l'action et qui n'ont avec elle aucun rapport ultérieur." *Réflexions sur le Théâtre Allemand.*

49) *A Swarm of Hornets met him, p. 133.* — The Story is related by Tschudi in his Helvetic Chron. V. I, p. 241.

50) *It was Tell's Arrow, p. 140.*—There are two Classes of Writers by whom Tell and his History have been assailed. The *first* consists of the Partisans of Austria — Men, who, in their hatred of every thing like Freedom, are necessarily anxious to depreciate and degrade its Heroes. Such, amongst others, were Rudolph Weid and Melchior Flueler, each of whom has denounced Tell's act in defence of his Family and Fatherland with the names of Assassination, Butchery, Rebellion, &c. The best answer to these Libellers is the approbation of Tell's Countrymen and the sanction, which his conduct has received from the wise and good of all succeeding Ages. "Omnes Boni, quantum in ipsis fuit, Cæsarem occiderunt. Aliis consilium, aliis animus, aliis occasio, defuit: Voluntas nemini." *Cic. Philip. II, p. 12.*

The *second* Class of Tell's Adversaries consists of what may be called the Originality or Novelty-Hunters, ("I think they call themselves Philologists!") — Men, who affect a perpetual scepticism as to every thing established or received and who, rather than be deemed guilty of thinking like others or of being indebted for any of their conclusions and beliefs to preceding Writers, would run into any lengths, however wild or extravagant, on the other side. Not (as it has been somewhere said of them) that they are altogether indifferent to right and wrong, but Truth, to be welcome, must be a rare discovery of their own! Such, among others, are the Authors, who

have expended so many Volumes in anxious endeavours to prove, that Troy never existed — that Homer was not Homer, or that, instead of *one*, there were *twenty* Homers! — that Richard "the Hump-backed," should have been called Richard "the Handsome"—and that Pisistratus, Pindar, Aristotle, Sir Thomas More, Shakespeare, and all the wisest and greatest Men of the last five and twenty hundred years, were Dolts and Idiots for having been of a contrary opinion. Like a certain Professor in one of our Universities, who is reported to have said that he knew more Greek than all the old Grecians put together, so would these learned Goths persuade us that they are better versed in ancient History than even the Actors or Contemporaries themselves. *

But to return to Tell. The principal ground on which these Persons have founded their objections to him and his history, is that an Adventure similar to that recorded of him by the Swiss Historians, with regard to the Apple, is reported in the Annals of Saxo Grammaticus, as having happened, in 965, to one Toko, a Dane. But even admitting the authenticity of the Danish Legend (which was printed for the *first* time at Paris in 1486, just one hundred and seventy-nine years after the exploit of Tell)—Admitting that the Story of Toko is *not* an interpolation of the 15th Century — we have no authority to

* As modern Chemists are indebted to ancient Alchemists, so, most assuredly, will future Historians be, to present Philologists. — It is to be regretted, however, that these latter should be so blind to the "Ultra citraque," and that they will not learn how very poor is the harvest of fame, which they are thus reaping with their never-resting Sicles of Objection and Doubt.—"It is always easy" (says Dr. Johnson) "to be on the "negative" side. If a Man were to deny that Canada was taken, you could not reduce him to an absurdity. He might support his denial by very plausible arguments." — Would that some of the learned, though not very judicious, Writers, who have been tasking their ingenuity for arguments against the existence of Homer and the authenticity of the Gospel, could be taught this wholesome truth!

assume that the Traditions concerning Tell are fabulous. We are not to discredit a circumstance narrated of one age and Country, because a similar one is supposed to have occured in another.

The Story of Tell, however, must finally rest for credence or rejection on the strength or weakness of its own evidences, which may be thus briefly summed up.—1st The uninterrupted Tradition and Belief of the Swiss, from Father to Son, for more than 500 years; 2dly The many old German Songs and Romances in which he is celebrated and which (as Coxe has very justly observed) are so remarkable for their ancient dialect and simplicity, as to leave little doubt either of their own authenticity or of the truth of the deeds which they commemorate; 3rd The Chronicles and Narratives of Klingenberg, Egloff Etterlin, Melchior Russ, Tschudi, Simler, and other Historians, from the 14th Century down to the present day; 4th The Erection of three Chapels (one of them—*viz* at the Tell's plat—in 1388, only 34 years after Tell's death, and when there were 114 persons present in the Landsgemeinde of Uri, who had personally known him), and the Religious Solemnities in which, for the last 450 years, his Country-men have never failed annually to commemorate his deeds and to thank God for the prowess and triumph of his arm.—See *Müller, I., c. 18, Note 233 and the Authorities there referred to;* also *the Work of M. Hisely*, who has reprinted the Danish Fable of *Uriel Freudenberger*, together with the Tracts of *Balthazar*, *Zurlauben*, and *Haller*, and additional proofs and arguments of his own, which seem to place the authenticity of Tell's History beyond all reasonable objection or doubt.

The last of Tell's Posterity—a Female named Verena—died in 1720. The Male Branch had become extinct, in 1684, by the death of John Martin Tell of Attinghausen. It is not ascertained how the Family first acquired this property—probably through the marriage of its gallant Ancestor with the Daughter of Walter Fürst.—Tell resided at, and was

Mayor, or first Magistrate of Bürglen, which is not half an hour's walk from the Village of Attinghausen. He lived for many years after the events celebrated in the preceding pages — performed his part at the battles of Morgarten and Laupen in 1315 and 1339 — and perished, in 1354, in his generous attempt to rescue a Child from the overflowing Waters of the Schächen.—

Οὐ φθίνει κροίσου φιλόφρων Ἀρετά
Τὸν δὲ ταύρῳ χαλκέῳ καυ —
τῆρα νηλὲα νὸον
Ἐχθρὰ Φάλαριν κατέχει παντᾶ φάτις,
Οὐ δὲ μιν φόρμιγγες ὑπω —
ρόφιαι κοινωνίαν
Μαλθακὰν παίδων ὀάροισι δέχονται.
Τὸ δὲ παθεῖν εὖ, πῶρτον ἄθλων.
Εὖ δ' ἀκούειν, δευτέρα μοῖ —
ρ'. Ἀμφοτέροισι δ' ἀνήρ
Ὅς ἂν ἐγκύρσῃ ,καὶ ἕλῃ,
Στέφανον ὕψιστον δέδεκται. Pind. Pyth. A.

Whilst Austria's Tyrant sinks forlorn,
The Parent's curse, the Infant's scorn,
The Hate of Human-kind;
Blest with the meed, which Virtue gives,
Lo! Tell's pure name to ages lives,
In every nobler heart enshrin'd.
Man's first, best prize is to excell;
His next, the praise of doing well;
But He, who tastes their sweets combin'd,
Who wins, who wears, the double Crown
Of patriot Triumph and of just Renown,
Hath reach'd Heaven's highest Bliss to Man, on Earth, assign'd.

51) *The Bull of Uri, p. 145.* — Der Stier von Uri. — Uranii in bello sylvestris Uri cornu, operoso argento circa labra ornatum, inflant, quem *Taurum Uraniensem* vocant — den Stier von Uri.—Simile vero cornu Unterwaldii quoque in bello,

secum ferunt.—Lucernates æreis Cornibus quandoque utuntur, quibus se a Carolo magno donatos jactant.— *Harschhörner* vocant. — *Simler Rep. Helvet. L. II, p. 125; Plantini Helvetia antiqua et nova, p. 169.*

52) *An old Town from Heathen time renown'd, p. 152.* — Windisch—anciently Vindonissa—founded by the Romans.

53) *And bathe herself in blood as in May-dew, p. 153.*—As the Murderers themselves were not to be found, their innocent Relatives, Friends, Servants, and Subjects, were, with unrelenting fury, hunted down and extirpated by the Family of Albert, his Daughter Agnes, Queen of Hungary, taking the lead, and signalizing herself above others, in these bloody atrocities. On one occasion she is said to have waded in the blood of sixty-three Victims, with the exulting exclamation that she was bathing herself in May-dew!—In vain did the Wife of Wart (who, though accidentally present, is supposed to have been himself guiltless of the murder) embrace her feet and water them with her tears, to obtain pardon for her Husband. He was broken alive on the Wheel, from the heigh of which he continued, with his last sigh, to console his faithful Companion, who remained alone with him, on her knees, praying and weeping for three days, untill his cherished Soul had taken its flight to another World. She afterwards retired to mitigate and end her sorrows in a Cloister.—As for the heartless Agnes—she likewise at a later period, withdrew into the Convent of Königsfelden, which She had founded on the spot where her Father was slain, and endowed out of the Wealth so unjustly taken from the numerous Victims of her Revenge. *Etterlin, 35, 36; Müller, Vol. II., c. 1* &c.

54) *And bid the Saviour of his Country hail, p. 157.*

"And bid the Father of his Country hail!
"For lo! the Tyrant prostrate in the dust,
"And Rome again is free!"—*Akenside.*

55) *The Reuss — great God! — was Witness to the Deed, p. 167.*—The Reuss, issuing from the Gotthardt, rushes down

to Flüelen — then, after losing itself, for a while, in the Lake of the Forest Cantons, reappears at Luzern — and winding onwards from thence, continues its course beyond Windisch in Aargau (the scene of Albert's assassination), near which it unites its waters to those of the Aar.

56) *The Drizzling Bridge, p. 167*, or rather 'The Devil's Bridge.'

57) *The Rocky-Gate, p. 168.* — This is an Anachronism. The Urner-Lock, or Hole of Uri, was not made till 400 years after — viz. in 1707. — The „Smiling Vale" of the Urseren was previously accessible only by a Bridge of Boards, suspended over the Reuss and called the "Staubende Brücke" or Drizzling Bridge, from the Showers of Spray with which it was perpetually envelopped.

58) *Another River issuing thence, p. 168.* — The Ticino.

THE END.

Bonne
wolfenchiesen

Pergamenter – parchemin, chamois

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